

# IN THESE TIMES

VOL. 9, NO. 26

MAY 29-JUNE 11, 1985

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## THE LAST HARVESTER

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BUSTING  
in  
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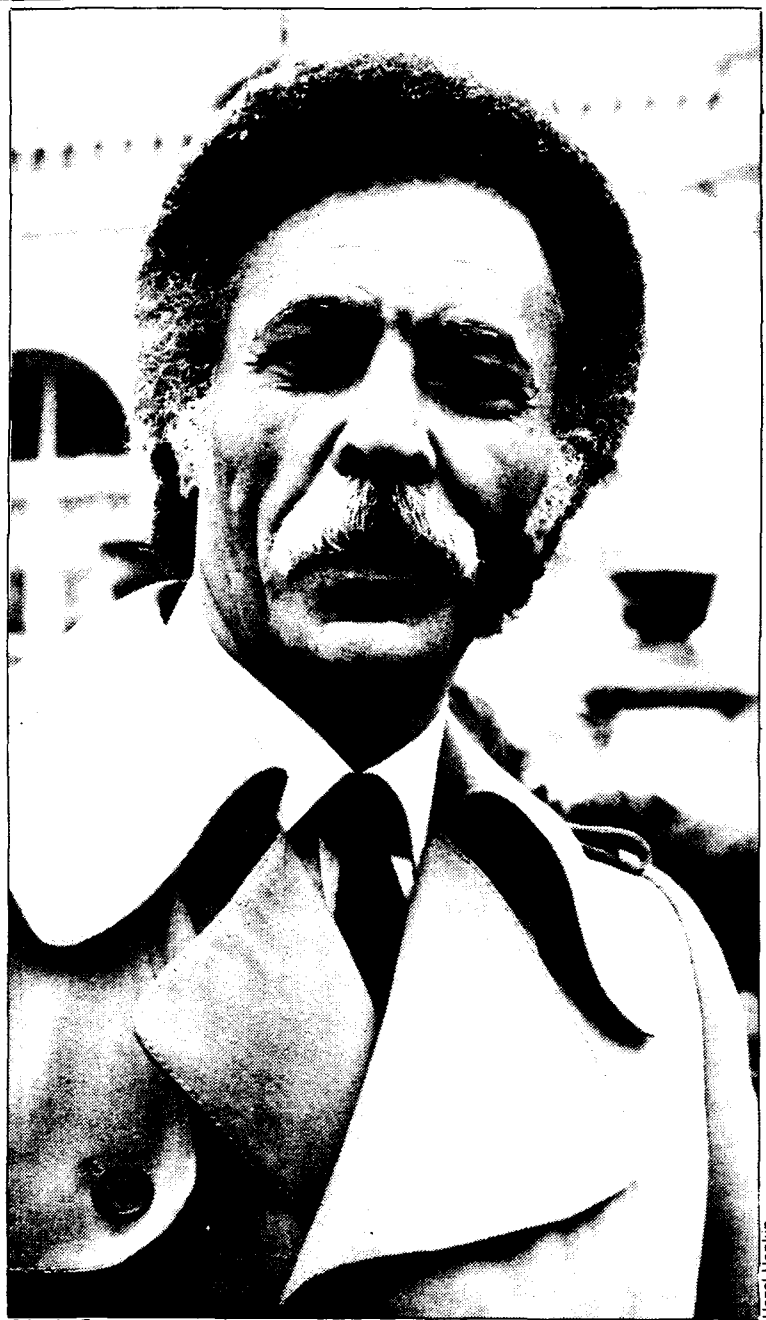
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Black Caucus member Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA)

## Black Caucus bargaining chip

By Michael Lewin Ross

WASHINGTON

For the fifth straight year, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) has offered Congress a "Compassionate Alternative Budget" to the one proposed by President Reagan for fiscal year 1986.

"We believe this nation has turned the corner," said Rep. Mickey Leland (D-TX), chairman of the 20-member caucus. "Americans will no longer allow the Reagan administration to continue to cut social programs to the bone and beyond, while pandering to the greed and gluttony of the wealthy."

The Black Caucus budget is considered an important bargaining chip for blacks during budget negotiations. More important, it is the most comprehensive statement available on the domestic and foreign policy views of elected black officials. The CBC budget calls for a three-year freeze in military spending and full funding for many federal programs the Reagan administration seeks to eliminate. The Black Caucus proposal would reduce the federal deficit by \$336 billion over the next three years, compared to a \$239 billion cut in the president's budget and a \$289 billion reduction in a White House-Senate compromise. Much of the difference comes from CBC proposals to close tax loopholes and raise \$17.4 billion in new revenues by 1988.

Caucus member Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA) said the CBC budget "once again has the most equitable approach to saving social programs vitally needed by the middle class and the poor, to making the deepest cuts in unwarranted military spending, to undertaking a responsible reform of existing tax codes, and to achieving the lowest budget deficits for the next three years."

President Reagan's budget plan for FY 1986 would cut domestic spending by \$33.6 billion while increasing military spending by \$32 billion. The only reduction in the federal deficit, \$33.3 billion, would come from increased revenues generated under existing tax laws.

Julius Hobson Jr., a congressional aide to Walter Fauntroy (D-DC), who helped draft the CBC budget, called the Reagan plan "as bad or worse than anything [Reagan] has done before. It's simply more devastating than it has ever been in the past."

"Reagan's student aid cuts were a joke," Hobson continued. "Outside of a few public colleges, it would shut anybody who is disadvantaged out of all the colleges in the nation."

The Reagan plan was not well-received in the Senate, where many Republicans who face re-election in 1986 are worried about the effect of budget cuts in their states. A May 9 compromise between the White House and Senate Republicans would restore funding for many programs targeted by Reagan for elimination, including Job Corps, the Small Business Administration, rural housing and Amtrak. Other programs, such as Social Security, Medicare, student aid and agricultural assistance, would face cuts but not elimination. In the White House-Senate plan, the Pentagon would receive an increase for inflation in FY 1986, and a 3 percent real increase in funding the following two years. Many programs to help the poor would be

eliminated, including Urban Development Action Grants, low-income housing assistance and Community Services Block Grants.

### Ignoring reality.

"It is no secret that our urban areas need revitalization," said CBC Chairman Leland. "The administration budget and the Republican-controlled Senate compromise ignores that reality." The CBC budget would restore funding for public transportation assistance, housing programs, the Job Corps, Urban Development Action Grants, child nutrition programs, Medicare, the Community Development Block Grant Program and the Summer Youth Program.

The CBC plan would mandate a three-year freeze in military outlays costing \$789.6 billion through 1988, compared to the \$964.5 billion "rearmament plan" offered in the Reagan budget. "The American public [won't] stand still for the gross waste and abuse in our defense programs," Leland said, "as we ladle dollar after dollar into ill-conceived and unnecessary weapons systems. It is obscene that our nation has underwritten liquor tabs and vacations for defense contractors at a time when the administration is calling for further cuts in needed social programs."

In their budget proposal, the Black Caucus calls for a nuclear freeze and aggressive arms control initiatives leading to major weapons reductions. Funding would be terminated for several major nuclear weapons projects, including the MX missile, the Trident II, the Pershing II and the cruise missile. To offset the decrease in jobs due to weapons cancellations, the CBC proposes a major "conversion" employment program.

The CBC plan for restraint in the military budget comes at a time of growing public sentiment for cutting military spending. In a *Washington Post/ABC News* poll in late March, respondents favored "substantial cuts" in military spending by a 53-44 percent margin. In mid-May the House Budget Committee voted for a one-year freeze in the defense budget.

The Black Caucus budget advocates a non-interventionist foreign policy, eliminating funds for the Rapid Deployment Force, decreasing the number of aircraft carrier battle groups from 13 to 10 and reducing the number of U.S. troops stationed in Europe and Asia. In addition, the CBC budget allows for a substantial increase in economic aid to Third World countries, particularly in Africa.

In many ways, the CBC budget reflects the liberal Democratic priorities of the '70s. Rep. Lane Evans (D-IL) said the budget "maintains the Democratic Party's historic commitment to fairness and equal opportunity. In offering their enlightened approach to deficit reduction, the Black Caucus deserves credit for bravely stepping forward when many others are falling back."

Congressional aide Hobson said if the CBC budget became law, it would "take us back at least to 1982" in restoring cuts to programs for the poor and middle class.

The Black Caucus plan includes a substantial revision of the tax codes, closing loopholes and shelters and shifting the tax burden toward the wealthy. A recent study by the Children's Defense Fund concluded that the aggregate federal taxes paid by poor families increased 58 percent between 1980-82, while taxes for the wealthy dropped dramatically. Under the CBC proposal, all those under the poverty line would no longer pay income taxes. The Black Caucus also calls for a 25 percent minimum tax on incomes of more than \$70,000 for individual filers and more than \$100,000 for corporations and joint filers.

The CBC budget initiative comes amidst the debut of William Gray (D-PA) as chairman of the powerful House Budget Committee. Gray, a black minister from Philadelphia, is widely regarded as a skillful negotiator and an able spokesman for the interests of the poor and middle class. Although Gray declined to comment on the CBC budget

## THE STORY INSIDERS

plan, several parts of his committee's plans for domestic spending bear a strong resemblance to the CBC proposal.

"The Black Caucus takes cognizance of Chairman Gray's institutional role as head of the Budget Committee," explained Hobson. "No one wants to embarrass him—he has to put together a budget for the whole Democratic Party. But the CBC budget gives him leverage to do what he wants to do."

Although no one expects the House to endorse the Black Caucus budget, it will be an important bargaining chip for the CBC in the weeks ahead. Since Republicans tend to vote against the annual budget resolution in the Democrat-controlled House, the Democrats need every vote in their party to pass the budget. This gives the 20-member Black Caucus significant influence.

Ironically, one item the Black Caucus considered cutting this year was funding for the Reagan-controlled Civil Rights Commission. After some debate, members decided to keep the Commission. Said Hobson, "We decided to leave it in because, thanks to the Constitution, Reagan won't be president forever."

Michael Lewin Ross is an aide to a member of the House of Representatives.

## Summertime

With this issue, *In These Times* begins its biweekly summer schedule. The next issue of *In These Times* will be dated June 12-25, 1985.

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IN THESE TIMES

The Independent  
Socialist Newspaper

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by Institute for Public Affairs, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657, (312) 472-5700

Member: Alternative Press Syndicate.

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(ISSN 0160-5992)

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## IN THESE TIMES



No one liked MOVE, but the neighbors did not expect to be treated like a Third World hamlet.

Deborah Houseworth-Findlay

By James Houseworth-Findlay

PHILADELPHIA, PA

“ATTENTION, MOVE. THIS IS America. You have to abide by the laws of the United States.” With that ultimatum, shouted over a bullhorn early on the morning of May 13, Philadelphia Police Commissioner Gregore Sambor precipitated a gun battle. When it was over, 11 MOVE members had been burned alive and 60 of this city’s row houses destroyed by a massive fire that ignited after a two-pound bomb was dropped on MOVE’s row-house. The action provoked an outcry from civil rights leaders and civil libertarians across the country.

Mayor W. Wilson Goode took full responsibility for the city’s handling of the incident, and despite the controversy his popularity remains high. Before the incident, his approval rating stood at 80 percent. After the “MOVE fire,” a TV poll showed that more than 70 percent of the area’s residents supported the actions the police had taken.

To make sense of the resilience of Goode’s support, an understanding of the relationship between MOVE and the City of Philadelphia is necessary.

#### MOVE’s history.

MOVE was founded in 1972 by Donald Glassey, who is white, and Vincent Leaphart, later known as John Africa, who is black. Members all took the surname Africa as a protest against racism, ate a diet of raw fruit and vegetables and rejected consumerist, technological living. Glassey, who has since become a federal informant, said the group’s initial purpose was simply “to make the world a better place.”

Once Glassey left the group, Africa became its sole leader, and through his charisma has acquired a mystical status with MOVE members. They claim he is “controlling things” even though he has not been seen in public since he was acquitted of federal weapons charges in 1981.

Marlene Reaves, on leave from the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, knew MOVE before its members ever made the headlines. “Back in 1974, I worked near their house in West Philly. They made soap and bread and handed out leaflets on their back-to-nature lifestyle. They were very strict vegetarians.

“However, it was rumored they had guns in the house, and the police raided the place looking for weapons,” she said.

During that raid, which took place during Frank Rizzo’s tenure as mayor, a two-month-old child was slung into the air and killed when police threw her mother against a wall. Only after that incident did MOVE members publicly brandish weapons in

## Racism’s heavy toll in Philadelphia

self-defense and use what Reaves called “inflammatory” language.

By 1978, MOVE’s lifestyle, which didn’t include plumbing, had begun to annoy their neighbors. Besides the stench, accompanying health problems and armed parades, MOVE members had erected a loudspeaker through which they taunted authorities at all hours of the day and night. When neighbors complained, Rizzo had MOVE’s house surrounded with sandbags, barricades and dozens of armed policemen.

After a three-week standoff in which many, including Dick Gregory, tried unsuccessfully to mediate, police engaged in a gun battle with MOVE and Officer James Ramp was killed. It remains disputed who fired first. Although Ramp was killed by a bullet fired from the rear, suggesting he was shot by his colleagues during the heat of the battle, nine MOVE members were convicted of third degree murder. Several other police and firefighters were wounded in that 1978 shootout, and in the racially charged atmosphere of the time, MOVE gained the reputation of being a violent, revolutionary organization.

MOVE members claim that their “brothers and sisters” in prison are innocent and that those incarcerated have suffered abuse in prison, including beatings and solitary confinement. Delbert Africa, who was kicked and beaten by Philadelphia police when he surrendered in 1978, has since had his testicles removed because he received so many kicks to the groin, according to Reaves.

#### Goode’s role.

Four years ago, MOVE members moved into the house that was later to become the center of a firestorm. Its owner, Louise James, was the sister of MOVE “guru” John Africa, and the mother of the group’s “naturalist minister,” Frank Africa.

A dispute soon arose similar to that in 1978. A bullhorn was erected; harangues filled with obscenities occurred for hours on end; nearby residents were threatened and occasionally assaulted. With the kind of behavior that “had even alienated their sympathizers,” according to Rev. David Gracie, MOVE’s new neighbors complained to the mayor, this time Wilson Goode. The mayor refused to remedy the situation in 1984, saying that he was “without a legal basis to act.”

A week before the fateful fire, the city began serious negotiations with MOVE. In return for vacating the house, MOVE wanted the release of their members from prison and a guarantee that they would not be arrested. Unwilling to accept these terms, Goode threatened to evict them on the basis of arrest warrants for health code violations and making terroristic threats.

MOVE spokesman Jerry Africa, in an interview with the *Uhuru Sounds*, a local independent black news program, blamed Goode for the breakdown in negotiations. “He couldn’t even guarantee the safety of our members on Osage Avenue, who had charges against them, when what we were really talking about was our brothers and sisters in prison, who were innocent.”

Goode claimed that he learned of the plan to use the “concussion device,” which started the fire, only minutes before it was actually used. Yet an investigation by the Philadelphia *Inquirer* revealed that police had been testing various explosive devices for at least several weeks, and perhaps longer, in preparation for a siege on the MOVE house. That investigation also revealed that the material used in the explosive, DuPont tovox, was designed for use in excavating quarries and mines, and was never intended for use above ground.

The decision to drop a bomb on MOVE may stem largely from the Philadelphia Police Department’s special hatred for MOVE due to Ramp’s death in the 1978 incident. In addition, both Sambor and black Managing Director Leo Brooks, who oversaw the operation, have military backgrounds. Sambor is a retired major in the Army Reserve, and Brooks, a former two-star Army general, came to the Goode administration directly from the Defense Department.

#### Community support.

Although the strong white support for

“Because the mayor’s black doesn’t mean it’s not racism.”

Goode can be partially explained by the racism that still pervades the white community, Reaves thinks the widespread black support for the action stems from issues of class and culture. “People in the area view MOVE as an embarrassment to the race; they’re not fixed right so as to fit into the system. I’ve heard women say, ‘Did you see her hair? Wasn’t that a disgrace?’ But MOVE wasn’t filthy, they were just different. It’s just that their neighbors wanted to be middle class.”

Goode has taken a tough stance since the incident. In a televised speech a day after the fire, he employed the anti-terrorist rhetoric that has become the hallmark of U.S. political discourse these days. Saying, “We have seen them kill a police officer and...threaten the life of the president,” Goode called MOVE a “group dedicated to the destruction of our way of life.”

Yet Jerry Africa said in the interview that “MOVE isn’t out to tell anybody else how to live. We’re just trying to prepare for revolution in a way that supports life.”

Goode also claimed in his speech that MOVE had dug tunnels under the street and had explosives that might have been used to blow up the entire block. Yet when the destroyed house was excavated by police, no tunnels or automatic weapons were found.

Goode’s actions won him some political allies in unexpected places. The presidents of the local police and firefighters’ unions—two conservative figures who had recently attacked the mayor for refusing to hire more officers despite a budget crunch—strongly applauded the action. And Attorney General Edwin Meese said in California that “the situation that developed was caused by the criminals, not the police.”

In another twist, the liberal members of the Philadelphia City Council narrowly defeated a resolution that would have led to an independent investigation of the MOVE incident. John Street, who entered politics after several years of housing activity, introduced the bill. After an hour-long caucus with the mayor, Street said, “There’s a serious unresolved issue as to why any explosive device was used at all with children in the building...as well as why no immediate effort was made to fight the fire once the fire was started.”

What this may mean is that Goode’s political bubble has burst. Trained at the Wharton Business School and strongly backed by local banking and corporate interests, Goode won office on the strength of a united black electorate, plus the votes of white liberals, in 1983. He sees himself as a skillful manager overseeing a shrinking pool of resources, not as an advocate for the poorer neighborhoods of the city. His major initiative in minority communities has been a campaign against graffiti, while his main efforts have concentrated on mid-town development projects, like a proposed new convention center. Perhaps Goode was due for criticism, and this incident will provide the catalyst for a more frank public assessment of his entire record.

But there is more than mere political jockeying going on in the wake of the MOVE incident. The real issues are more far-reaching.

The incident makes clear that the occupation of more niches of the power structure of major U.S. cities by black politicians has not wrought a substantive change in American racism. At a news conference announcing a law suit against the city to force a grand jury investigation, attorney William Kunstler said that “from the highest to the lowest, city officials wrote MOVE members out of the human race, just as Hitler did the Jews over 40 years ago.”

Jerry Africa said, “The basis of politics is confusion.”

And as Marlene Reaves put it, “Just because the mayor is black, and the managing director is black, and a lot of the police are black, doesn’t mean it’s not racism.”

James Houseworth-Findlay writes for *The Other Side*, a progressive evangelical Christian magazine based in Philadelphia.



# IN SHORT

Beth Maschinot

## Gipper goes home

Vowing to return home and "imitate George Gipp and score a victory for peace," Salvadoran President José Napoleón Duarte accepted an honorary degree from his old alma mater, Notre Dame, last week. Outside the packed convocation center, 400 protesters reminded the clean-cut crowd that Duarte's past attempts at peace have spelled death for thousands of Salvadoran civilians from indiscriminate bombing and napalming. Graduation-goers muttered as they pushed through the coalition of Central American groups holding signs that read "Notre Shame" and "Bishop Romero, Jean, Dorothy, Ita, Maura"—referring to some of the slain religious in El Salvador—"Notre Dame has forgotten, but we haven't."

But inside, the reception for Duarte was mostly warm. Notre Dame President Rev. Theodore Hesburgh gave a glowing introduction for his former student, and the crowd of 14,000 gave him a standing ovation after his "I remember my days at Notre Dame" speech. A dozen or so people held white crosses and signs symbolizing the Salvadoran dead. Another small "dissent" came from an unlikely quarter: Cable TV magnate Ted Turner, usually known for his gung-ho America stands, told Duarte he thought the U.S. should be sending "a few more tractors and a few less tanks" to Central America. "I'm sick of it myself," he added, to strong applause.

A few days later the towering Time-Life building in Manhattan was the scene of another demonstration and civil disobedience against Duarte's reception of accolades from Notre Dame. While the Salvadoran leader attended a dinner some 50 stories above, 600 protesters chanted and carried mock U.S. fighter jets and helicopters. The demonstration—sponsored by the Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador—grew violent at times when members of the New York City police force started pushing and punching protesters who were attempting to blockade the entrances of the building. Forty protesters were arrested and dragged, arms twisted, bodies contorted, to waiting police vehicles.

Like the protesters at Notre Dame, the New York group had come up with their own version of the famous Notre Dame fight song: "Bomb, bomb for old Notre Dame, soldiers and peasants all of the same, napalm women and kids and all, the news won't report it, so have a ball." Barbara Dudley, national director of the National Lawyers Guild, told the protesters that the "Time-Life building is an appropriate place for demonstrating, because Salvador has not been much in the news lately. We hear about elections, we don't hear about deaths anymore. But the deaths continue to go on in our name."

## Block those nukes

When the Navy finalized its plan two months ago to station a battleship carrying nuclear missiles in New York City, the only obstacle in the way was congressional funding. But while the Navy waits for several million dollars from congress, the fight against the nuclear ship is being waged on three new fronts: at the ballot box, in federal court, and in the annual city budget squabble, writes Susan Jaffe. Antinuclear activists hit the streets earlier this month in a petition drive to collect 30,000 signatures of registered New York City voters in order to place a Navy referendum on the ballot in November. It asks New Yorkers to decide whether the city charter should be amended so that the Board of Estimate (the mayor, city council president, city comptroller and the five borough presidents) cannot approve any city money for the port and cannot sell or lease the Navy city property. But to avoid going to the board to purchase or lease the land, the Navy intends to condemn the Staten Island land it needs for the port. Opponents still believe that the referendum, if passed, could prevent a Navy takeover.

Meanwhile, Mayor Ed Koch's promise to welcome the Navy with about \$15 million in waterfront and infrastructure repairs faces opposition in City Council. Koch is asking for about \$137,000 to improve a street near the port so it can handle Navy traffic. But a majority of the council must approve the expense and a council majority already supports a ban on nuclear ships in New York harbor.

The unwillingness of anyone in the Koch administration to estimate the final cost to the city of

port construction and city services is one of the complaints lodged against the Navy and the Department of Defense in a federal court lawsuit filed April 24 by a coalition of environmental groups and city council members. They argue that the Navy violated the National Environmental Policy Act by refusing to consider the port's full economic and environmental impact on the city. The plaintiffs want to know the consequences of an accident involving the ship's nuclear weapons and how the Navy would prevent and deal with an accident—a scenario that the Navy's environmental study omitted.

Members of several Democratic clubs and peace groups have already collected almost 15,000 signatures for the referendum. It has been endorsed by Physicians for Social Responsibility, New York State Americans for Democratic Action, Local 371 of the Service Employees Union, the Unity Coalition, the Staten Island

Methodist Federation, and the list is growing. But Board of Estimate member and mayoral candidate Carol Bellamy, who opposes nuclear weapons in the harbor, also says she opposes changes in the city charter that would dilute the board's power. "This is an attempt to let New Yorkers decide on the issue," says Tom DeLuca of Mobilization for Survival, part of the Coalition for a Nuclear-Free Harbor. One of the more popular petitioning spots, he reports, is on the Staten Island ferry, where commuters can see the site the Navy is eyeing for nuclear weapons. Referendum organizers plan to submit their petitions to the city clerk for certification in early June and will celebrate with a June 8th demonstration across the Verrazano Bridge "to symbolically block the entrance to New York harbor." *This week's contributors: Connie Blitt and Dennis Bernstein*





By David Corn

NEW YORK

**U**PON HIS ARRIVAL AT MIAMI International Airport on January 16, Edward Haase, a broadcast engineer and freelance journalist from Kansas City, Mo., checked into U.S. Customs. He was asked the usual questions. Where had he been? Did he have anything to declare? He provided the answers. A Customs official then took his declaration card and circled several of his responses, including the country he had visited—Nicaragua.

Haase was then directed to a secondary inspection station, where another Customs official searched his luggage. The Customs agent removed several of the books and magazines Haase had declared, as well as a list of addresses he found behind a picture frame. He called in a supervisor, who then contacted the FBI for assistance in determining whether any of these materials might be seditious and, thus, unimportable under federal law.

The FBI agent conducted his own search of Haase's bags. While Haase was off purchasing a ticket for his next flight, the FBI agent made copies of all the materials he found of interest. When Haase returned, he was given back his material and allowed to continue on his way. The FBI agent kept the copies of the material, which had been judged unthreatening to the republic.

This is how the FBI came to possess copies of Haase's personal address book, his diary, two articles he had written and a list of names and addresses of organizations concerned with Central American affairs.

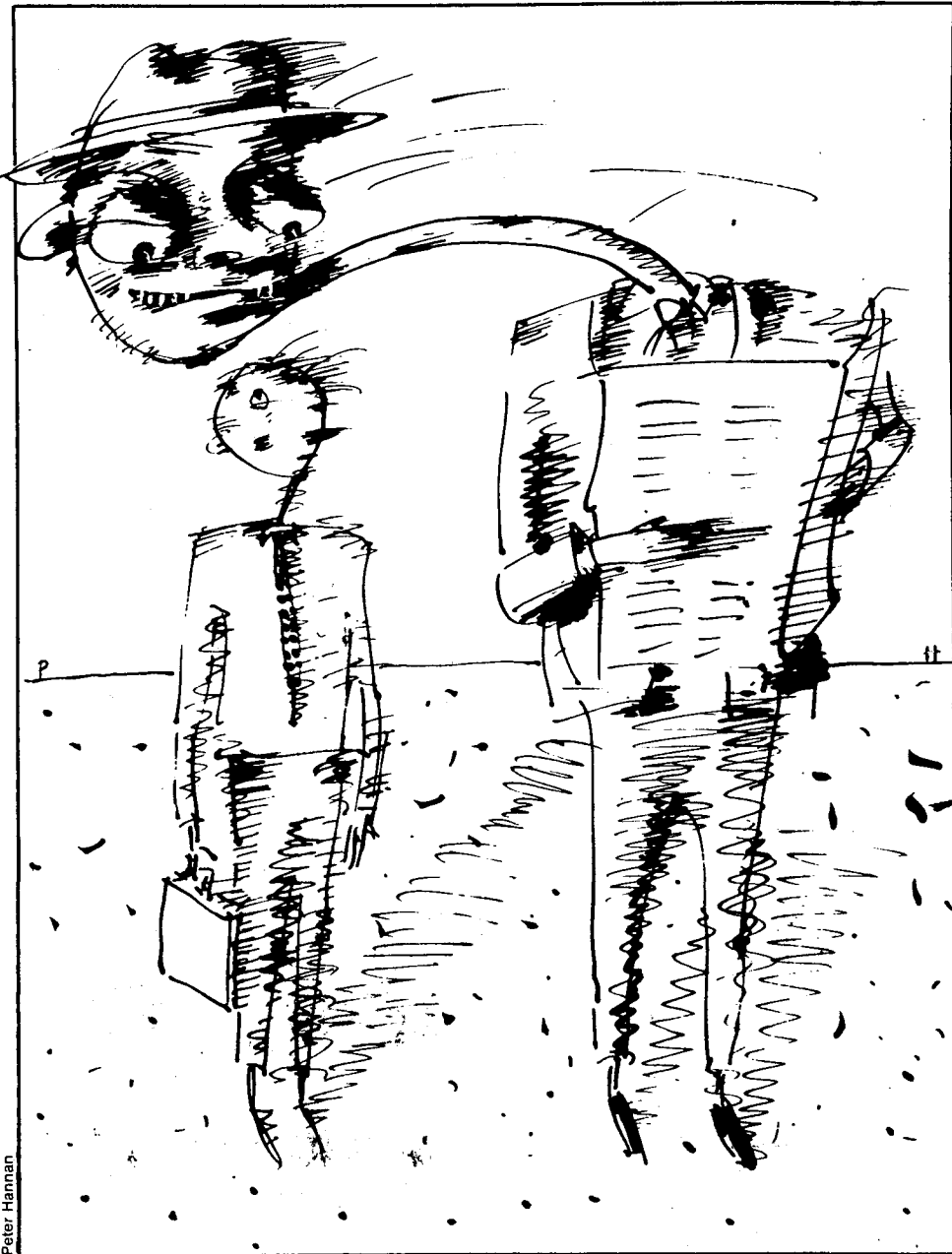
This is also what prompted a lawsuit brought by the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), which sought to force the FBI to return the copies and to prevent it from using any of the materials it swiped from Haase for intelligence purposes. The suit also called for a halt to such border searches, a move that the FBI opposed. On May 14, U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson ruled against granting such an injunction. Before this, however, he did issue a temporary restraining order that prohibited the FBI from using any of the Haase material. After that the FBI proposed to seal the Haase papers, an arrangement that Jackson accepted.

"We won the battle but lost the war," remarks Michael Ratner, an attorney for CCR. He adds that CCR plans to appeal Jackson's denial of the injunction. "We want a prohibition on Customs and the FBI from reading the private papers of U.S. citizens when they cross the border."

The Haase case, though, represents more than just another civil liberties violation. What happened to Haase, say members of organizations that oppose U.S. policy in

## CIVIL LIBERTIES

# Travelers to Nicaragua harassed by FBI



Central America, is but one example of government harassment of dissidents.

The most obvious form of intimidation they point to is FBI visits to persons who have traveled to Nicaragua and to those active in organizations that protest administration policy. On April 17, in testimony before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, FBI Director William Webster confirmed that the FBI had questioned 100 American travelers to Nicaragua, at the behest of the CIA and the National Security Council. These visits, Weber maintained, were conducted

for "a specific foreign counter-intelligence reason for each case." They were not intended to intimidate the subjects, he said.

But when the FBI comes knocking at the door, the chilling effects cannot be ignored. At the hearing, Rep. John Conyers Jr. (D-MI) told Webster he was amazed to hear the director suggest that "no one should be intimidated by a little friendly visit from a polite FBI agent who left his card."

In several cases, FBI agents have visited people's residences, leaving notes or cards asking that their visit be returned with a phone call. "We know what they want,"

the established practices of international law, the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Nuremberg Principles.

During the four-day trial, the jury of nine whites, two blacks and one Hispanic heard arguments comparing apartheid to Nazism and charging the U.S. with violating international law for "aiding and abetting" the regime through its "constructive engagement" policies.

Testifying on defendants' behalf were a number of prominent witnesses, including Sen. Paul Simon (D-IL), Rep. Charles Hayes (D-IL), exiled South African poet and Northwestern University professor, Dennis Brutus and Marjorie Benton, a former U.S. ambassador to UNICEF.

"We found that they acted out of necessity," said juror Catherine Zemke. "We were concerned that other people might start trespassing, but we also had to do the right thing."

The defendants were Alderman Allan Streeter, Director of the Jewish Urban Affairs Council, AFSCME international Vice President Steve Cullen, head of a Chicago social service agency Robert Lucas, President of the Black Press Institute Robert Lucas, pastor of the Discipleship Baptist Church Dr. Ralph Henley, pastor of the Church of the Brethren the Rev. Orlando Redakopp and Thomas Savage, son of Rep.

IN THESE TIMES MAY 29-JUNE 11, 1986 5 says Danny Lewis of the southeast regional office of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) in New Orleans. "They want to intimidate members into ceasing their activities."

Beth Perry, who works on the national staff of CISPES in Washington, D.C., says that she has assembled a list of more than a dozen instances of FBI agents attempting to contact CISPES members. A hotline operated by CCR received about 25 calls in the first three months of the year, each alleging some form of FBI harassment, according to Ratner. Not every call, he adds, concerned Central America-related organizing. The hotline number is (212) 477-5652.

Investigating some of the complaints received on the hotline, Ratner contacted several FBI offices. "I was stunned," he says. "I called four or five agents, and they admitted openly that they were conducting a counterintelligence operation and gathering information on people who visit Nicaragua. They were brazen. I have never been able to pick up the telephone and talk to the FBI before about an operation."

On Capitol Hill, several congressional committees have taken an interest in the FBI visits. The House judiciary subcommittee on civil and constitutional rights plans to hold further hearings on the FBI visits next month. The House Select Committee on Intelligence, according to a staff aide, has held an executive session on this matter.

Because these visits provoked a flurry of negative publicity, the FBI, Ratner and Perry believe, may be cutting back on such overt actions. Yet Danny Lewis reports that of the five occasions when the FBI tried to

## FBI Director William Webster confirmed that the FBI had questioned 100 American travelers to Nicaragua.

interview CISPES activities in New Orleans, three of these instances occurred in the past few weeks, all following Webster's congressional testimony and the subsequent press accounts.

Besides the FBI visits, representatives of groups opposing administration policy in Latin America suspect that they may be victims of other forms of government harassment and surveillance. Though they possess no conclusive proof, they worry

*Continued on page 10*

## ANTI-APARTHEID

# Acquittal of protesters sets legal precedent

By Salim Muwakkil

CHICAGO

**T**HE MAY 17 ACQUITTAL OF EIGHT protesters, charged with trespassing in the South African consulate here, was hailed as a moral victory against apartheid and concluded a trial that, in effect, served as a forum for the Free South Africa Movement. The case also represented the first judgment on South African policies to come out of the U.S. courts.

Utilizing the legal theory of "necessity," the defense lawyer changed the trial's focus from that of simple trespassing to the issue of protesting apartheid. "The victory was extremely significant because it sets a pre-

cedent for others who may want to engage in civil disobedience against apartheid," explained Lewis Myers Jr., an attorney on the defense team.

The multiracial group of defendants, all members of the Free South Africa Movement, had argued they were justified in trespassing by the "necessity" to help end the moral evil of the South African system of apartheid. There is a specific statute in Illinois law that excuses "conduct which would otherwise be an offense..." if that conduct is believed to be necessary "to avoid a greater public or private injury."

The defendants said they were compelled by a "deep sense of morality" to violate the city ordinance against trespassing. Not only were their actions justified by the Illinois stature, their lawyers argued, but also by

Gus Savage (D-IL).

Prosecuting attorney Gary Wallace insisted that South Africa was not the issue. "This is a simple case of trespassing which is a violation of the city's municipal code.... South African policies of apartheid are not on trial."

But the defense contended that South African policies were, in fact, at the heart of the trial. After establishing that apartheid is a "crime against humanity," for having encoded a system of laws that allow "murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian populations....," the defense team argued that the Nuremberg Principles hold all who know of such crimes responsible for disobeying any and all laws justifying them.

According to Free South Africa Movement members, jurors were chosen because of their ignorance on the subject of South Africa. "The jury's lack of knowledge about apartheid and South Africa was both depressing and encouraging," said Alice Palmer, wife of one of the defendants and active anti-apartheid organizer. "Depressing because it implies that there's a lot of ignorance out there, and people should be better informed. But encouraging in that when they do learn about it they want to do the right thing."



## IN THE NATION

## NEW JERSEY

## Governor race to test the left

By Bob Narus

TRENTON, NJ

WHILE MOST DEMOCRATS around the country can spend 1985 recovering from Reagan's re-election, those in New Jersey seem destined to relive it. Gov. Thomas Kean, a moderate Republican buoyed by a prosperous economy, enjoys popularity ratings even his own staff find hard to believe. Political observers here expect him to win re-election easily this fall, perhaps sweeping the GOP into control of the General Assembly as well.

As a result, the June 4 Democratic primary has become a trial run for 1989, when Kean must retire. The winner becomes the party's nominal head, handpicks the next state party chairman and assumes the early frontrunner position for '89. The primary is a golden opportunity for individual politicians and the segments of the party they represent to gain a toehold on the future.

The primary is also fraught with danger and uncertainty for the state's left community. The danger stems from Senate Majority Leader John Russo, who has staked out a position to the right even of Kean and has called on the Democratic Party to move "back to the center" and recapture the middle class. The uncertainty concerns Peter Shapiro, the 33-year-old Essex County executive who made *Mother Jones'* list of "The 10 Best State and Local Officials" last year, but whose nontraditional populist campaign has left many of the state's liberals questioning his political loyalties.

The uncertainty also centers on Newark Mayor Kenneth Gibson, the third mayoral candidate in the primary race, who in the past has championed the causes of the poor and the cities. But this year his campaign focuses on his managerial background and his civil engineering degree.

Russo sponsored the state's capital punishment law as well as an expired statute limiting the growth of state spending. He is also sympathetic to the pro-life movement, although he has pledged not to push any anti-abortion legislation himself.

The prospect of Russo's ascension to party leadership would normally be enough to impel the left to action. But as in many cases, leftists find it easier to recognize their enemies than their friends. The candidate they find the most puzzling is Peter Shapiro.

In 1975, a year after he graduated from Harvard, Shapiro upset a machine candi-



Gubernatorial candidate Peter Shapiro is running a nontraditional populist campaign.

date to become the youngest assemblyman in the state's history. His support for utility rate reforms, tenant legislation and a progressive income tax earned him a solidly liberal reputation.

Three years later, he overturned the entrenched but crumbling Essex County Democratic machine itself, winning election to the newly created and powerful post of county executive. He reorganized the incompetent, patronage-ridden county government, bringing in outside talent and elevating local community organizers to positions of influence.

With Shapiro's prodding, Essex County government began to venture into new areas, providing county resources for tenants, job seekers and artists. The county also began to do some old jobs better: it refurbished West End Park in the depressed Central Ward of Newark, and then contracted with a local group to maintain the park itself, giving the community a stake in keeping the park in good shape.

Another one of Shapiro's innovations was to close the county's youth shelters, turning the job of helping kids in trouble over to community organizations. The youths remained in their families and neigh-

borhoods, and the recidivism rate dropped dramatically.

Shapiro announced his candidacy for governor from the steps of one of the closed shelters and took as his theme the new, nonbureaucratic approach to getting things done. "I will undo the centralized, bureaucratic approaches we see today in New Jersey's government, and bring our services down to a level based in community and on a human scale," he promised his supporters. "Government should be more of an enabler, a catalyst and less the actual provider of direct services."

Some on the left are stirred by that message, especially among the community-based organizations who would be entrusted with the responsibilities that formerly rested on the shoulders of the state bureaucracy. The New Jersey Tenants' Organization (NJTO) has endorsed him, and NJTO Vice President John Atlas praises Shapiro for "using the power of government...to give credibility to issues other politicians ignore." High on Atlas' list of issues was the creation of the Tenant Resource Center, which committed public money to help organize renters and involve them in housing policy.

But Steve Rosenthal, a lobbyist for the Communications Workers of America (CWA), which represents many state workers, is not impressed with Shapiro's record or his campaign. He warns that identifying capable community organizations will be harder on the state level than it was for county government. His union, which has criticized Kean for contracting out many jobs formerly done by public employees, is also concerned about Shapiro's claim that he has cut the county payroll from 8,300 to 6,500.

"The basic theme is a Reagan-type message of decentralized government, of cutting back and turning things over to the private sector," Rosenthal said.

Shapiro insists that he does not mimic Reagan, or even Russo. Unlike Reagan and his New Federalism, Shapiro calls for providing state resources to match the responsibilities he would pass back to the local level—although that part of his message is heard less often than his anti-bureaucracy theme.

As for the loss of public jobs, Shapiro asks, "What are we in business for? Are we working for our employees or for the people who need services?"

Rosenthal insists that his union is not just concerned about saving union jobs (although he notes that one reason Shapiro has been able to save money on social services is the lower salaries paid by community organizations). The CWA has been in the forefront of the most important liberal legislative battles of the last four years. When the state faced a deficit during the 1982 recession, it pushed for a more progressive income tax rather than a hike in the sales tax. It was also instrumental in the successful campaign for a tough right-to-know law and the unsuccessful effort to pass a plant-closing bill.

Shapiro has not called for a more progressive tax system or a job retention law, Rosenthal complains. The candidate, for his part, argues that it would be suicidal to call for raising anyone's taxes when the state expects a \$600-\$900 million surplus this year. Instead, Shapiro wants the state to assume local and county welfare and court costs, to relieve the burdensome and regressive local property tax.

Peter Schucter, Shapiro's long-time political advisor, claims the unions are misreading his message. "He's talking about sharing power—bringing power down to the grass-roots level," Schucter said. The confusion may come from Shapiro's lack of a specific legislative agenda, with proposals the left can support, Schucter said. "We're more trying to establish a vision of what government's about and where it should go."

Leftists looking for such a legislative program might be more attracted to candidate Gibson. He has governed the state's largest city for 15 years and he boasts such accomplishments as bringing down what was once the nation's highest infant mortality rate. He has called for more state help to the cities and said he would raise the income tax on the wealthy to pay for it.

But Gibson has liabilities as well. Newark has not seen the kind of economic progress enjoyed by some other cities in the state. Gibson has also survived an indictment for giving a no-show job to a retired politician. And he surprised many by garnering 15 percent of the vote and coming in third in the 1981 gubernatorial primary. Yet most pundits doubt that he can expand on that base this time around.

What is the left to do? New Jersey Citizen Action, a coalition of community and labor organizations, will probably stay out of the race entirely, according to Executive Director Jeanne Otersen, because various candidates appeal to different parts of the coalition. Environmentalists, too, have been frozen in place since Rep. James Florio, the sponsor of Superfund who lost to Kean four years ago by 1,800 votes, decided he couldn't afford another defeat. And with the polls suggesting that cleaning up the environment is even more important to voters this year than the economy, every candidate, noted one environmentalist, "is saying the right things."

Atlas believes the left should unite behind Shapiro despite its reservations, arguing that it can use the campaign to build its base and force its issues onto the agenda. "Shapiro is in a position to help shape things if the progressives back him," he said.

Rosenthal would rather concentrate on keeping the Assembly in Democratic hands, since that house has been most receptive to labor's agenda in recent years. Two years ago, the Industrial Union Council (IUC), a renegade band of old Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) affiliates that never fully merged with the conservative state American Federation of Labor (AFL), pumped \$100,000 into swing districts and helped preserve the Democrats' narrow majorities in both houses. This year it plans to do the same.

The tactic might not work now, however. The top of the ticket traditionally plays a major role in the outcome of legislative races, and the IUC may have to put its weight behind the Democratic gubernatorial nominee—whoever he is—if only to keep a defeat from becoming a landslide. ■

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## FOREIGN POLICY

# Reagan polarizes West to 'unify' Europe

By Diana Johnstone

**D**URING HIS "BITBURG SUMMIT" tour of Europe, Ronald Reagan in the role of U.S. president succeeded in injecting a strong dose of poison into the West European body politic. American liberals in search of consolidation may conclude from the uproar over Bitburg, the Bonn economic summit deadlock, mass anti-NATO demonstrations in Spain and protests in the European Parliament that Reagan's visit was a flop. It is true that most Europeans heartily disliked Reagan's performance. But that is not necessarily the point.

Judging by the arrogance of his gestures and the extremism of his speeches, Reagan was not programmed this time out to make everybody love him. Instead, more blatantly than ever before, he was out to interfere in European politics, give a shot in the arm to the extreme right, encourage the revival of German nationalism and endorse European "unification"—the current euphemism for what used to be called "rollback."

The first thing he did in Bonn was to announce the embargo against Nicaragua. The second was to refuse to receive the opposition leader, Social Democratic Party (SPD) Chairman Willy Brandt. Such behavior was bound to arouse protests, dismissed by Reagan's German fans as "anti-Americanism." In only a few days, Reagan had set German political leaders to shouting at each other with unaccustomed bitterness.

Results of the May 2-4 economic summit in Bonn, the tour's main peg, were even more vacuous than usual. Once again, leaders of the seven richest capitalist countries went through rituals showing that they (and not the UN, for instance) are the world's top decisionmakers, without making any decision that could even begin to solve any of the world's real problems. This failure is by no means a real failure for the Reagan administration, which shows no particular taste for joint international decision-making, even among allies, but prefers bilateral dealings, where Uncle Sam can more surely get his way by arm-twisting. Mitterrand's "non" just gave American officials a chance to indulge in that enjoyable activity, hating the French.

This particular summit was little more than a sideshow to Reagan's revival meetings for the German right. After the ambiguous pilgrimage to Bitburg military cemetery, the most significant of these was the May 6 rally at Hambach Castle, where the American president preached California optimism (in a nutshell: this world must be perfect because I got rich in it) to 5,000 selected German high school students. In a lyric speech with quotes from Schiller, Reagan did his best to recruit them into the "me generation," promising them that possibilities of personal success knew no bounds in this marvelous time to be alive. Unlike their cousins on the "other side of the wall," he told them, they held their future in their own hands and could "follow their dreams all the way to the stars." Thanks to high tech, of course. He exhorted German young people to all go out and run their own businesses in this wonderage of free enterprise.

Since the young audience was German not American, Reagan's speechwriters did sound cultivated, with big words, sentences and erudite references. The ad had been carefully chosen for its symbolism, and Reagan spoke as if he knew all about it. As usual, Reagan used the symbolism to fit his anti-Soviet

patriots."

On May 27, 1832, some 30,000 people on the grounds surrounding the medieval Hambach castle at the couple of liberal newspaper publishers. This gathering was inspired by

French republicanism and was a high point in the "German Revolution," the unsuccessful effort to unify Germany from below, through struggle for democratic rights against the nobility. The demand was formulated for a federated republic in place of the existing federation of German principalities.

French and Polish republicans took part, joining in the call for friendship between the peoples of Europe against the "Holy Alliance" of counterrevolutionary kings and princes, whose repression of republicanism was organized by Metternich (Kissinger's hero, considered too soft by the new right strategists whose hero is Bismarck). After Bismarck succeeded in uniting Germany from the top, against the democratic demands voiced at Hambach, conservatives began to recuperate the Hambach symbol, interpreting it as the popular longing for a national unity achieved when Bismarck proclaimed the German Reich at Versailles in 1871.

It was on this very hillside, Reagan said, that the dream of democracy and national unity awakened in the German soul. He praised Germany's unsurpassed creativity and urged young Germans to be "proud of Germany's strength." Referring to the 1832 festival, Reagan declared: "Those first patriots cried out for a free, democratic and united Germany. We do so again today."

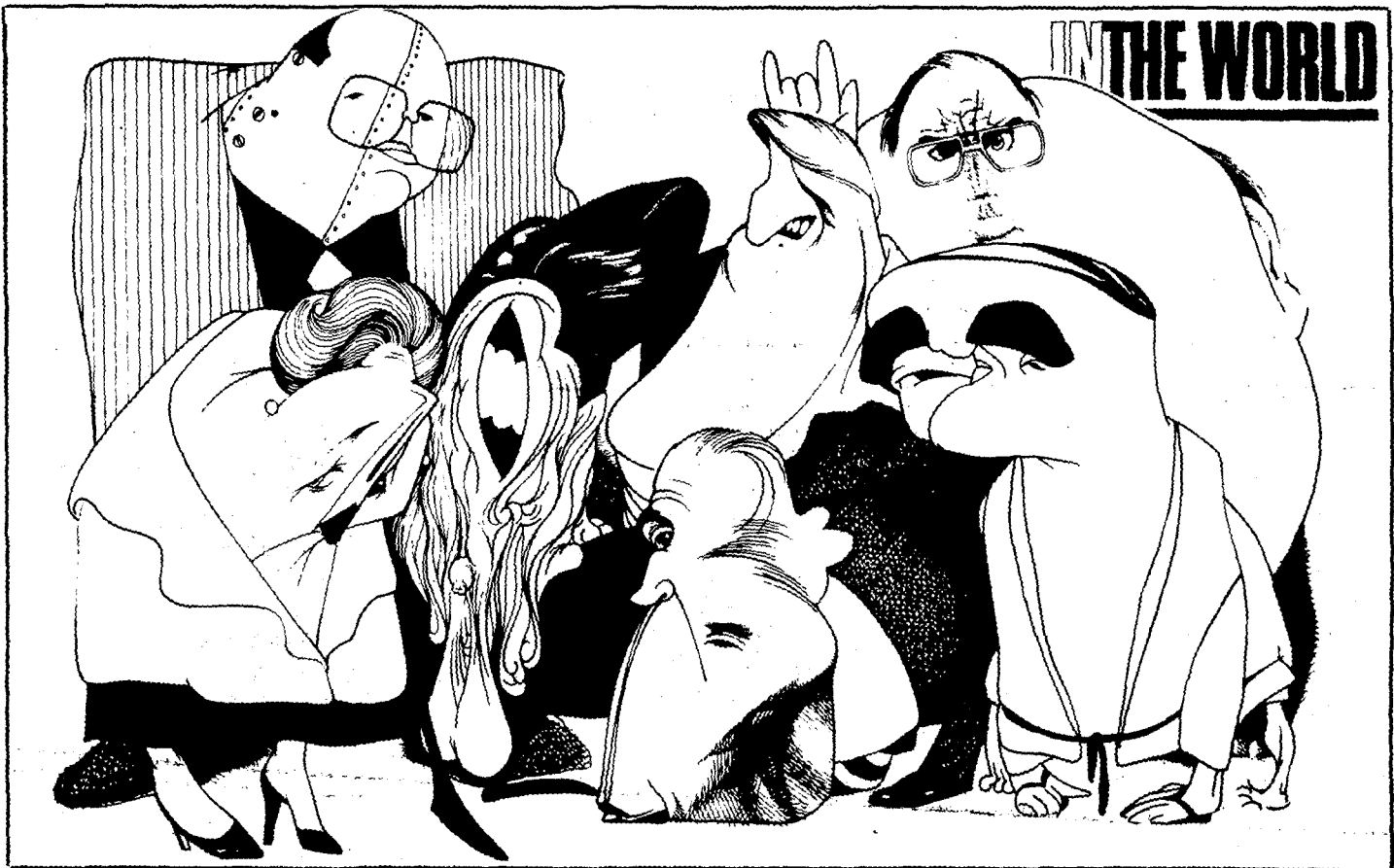
Was this the royal "we," or was Reagan speaking for the Germans, telling them what they were to cry out for? Indeed, since the growth of the German peace movement, the very NATO enthusiasts who condemned it as "German nationalism" have been trying to encourage proper, old-fashioned nationalism, telling the Germans they are quite right to want unification—something most of them have had the good sense to stop wanting.

"Democracy will only be complete when

Weizsäcker marked the 40th anniversary of Nazi Germany's World War II defeat by exhorting Germans, "Don't let yourselves be driven in-to enmity and hatred against other people, against Russians or Americans, against Jews or Turks, against Alternatives or Conservatives, against black or white." Reagan, on the other hand, managed to get through the 40th anniversary of V-E day without one kind word for the Russians. Nor, in his May 8 speech to the European Parliament at Strasbourg, did he mention Hitler by name. Instead, he spoke of the liberation of Europe from "tyrants" and "totalitarianism," abstract ideological words that, everyone knows, equate Nazi Germany with the USSR in the Reagan world view.

Reagan gave the Europeans a pep talk designed to overcome the "Europessimism" he had heard was afflicting them. He recalled the "guiding intellectual lights" and "geniuses" from Europe whose ideas and inventions transformed Europe. "Europe, beloved Europe, you are greater than you know," he intoned, comparing the work of building the future with the construction of a great cathedral. By this time in his speech, much of the left had walked out, but the right side of the European Parliament applauded enthusiastically and seemed quite seduced by the old pro, even when his teleprompter broke down.

National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane described the Strasbourg address as a major policy statement laying the basis for a lasting and stable relationship between the U.S. and the USSR. Couched in the Manichean optimism of Reaganism, the message was essentially the same one Washington has been sending to Moscow since at least Kissinger's day: there could be "fruitful cooperation" with the Soviet Union, but Soviet "conduct" must be corrected in the Third World.



all Germans and all Europeans are united," Reagan said. "Europe today—divided by concrete walls, by electrified barbed wire and by mined and manicured fields, killing fields—is a living portrait of the most compelling truth of our time: the future belongs to the free."

The day before, Social Democrats led by Saarland Prime Minister Oskar Lafontaine held a peace festival at the foot of Hambach castle. Guest of honor was Maria Schmidt-Cuatra, the widow of the Nicaraguan postal minister killed by *contras*. Lafontaine said Americans had to choose between the two sides of their national character, the humanistic side represented by Lincoln or the crusading world-cop side represented by Teddy Roosevelt.

West German President Richard von

He laid out the right-wing interpretation of recent history, which satisfies few Europeans, according to which "seen globally, Soviet conduct changed markedly and dangerously" in the '70s when—and because—the U.S. lost superiority over the Soviet Union in strategic nuclear weapons. This was Kissinger's "linkage" in more moralistic terms. Casting everything that happens in the Third World, and particularly in Nicaragua, in terms of "Soviet conduct" is quite wrong in the eyes of most of the European left, and this is the point where many of them, led by British Laborite Barbara Castle, walked out.

For Europe, Reagan announced a long Cold War: "Surely we have no illusions that convergence of the Communist system and the free societies of the West is likely.

IN THESE TIMES MAY 29-JUNE 11, 1985 7

We are in for an extended period of competition of ideas." The West's present task is to pitch in to "compete with the Soviet Union in the Third World. We have much in our favor, not least the experience of those states that have tried Marxism and are looking for an alternative." This is a bland way to refer to U.S. backing for guerrillas in Angola, Nicaragua and Cambodia.

But what of Europe itself? "Convergence" is ruled out. Yet Reagan expressed his "hope that in the 21st century—which is only 15 years away—all Europeans from Moscow to Lisbon will be able to travel without a passport and a free flow of people and ideas will include the other half of Europe." Reagan said the U.S. was committed "not only to the security of Europe, but we are committed to the recreation of a larger and more genuinely European Europe. The U.S. is committed not only to a partnership with Europe, the U.S. is committed to an end to the artificial division of Europe."

Given the Kremlin's stubborn wickedness, how is this to be accomplished? Will the Russians suddenly say "uncle"? This seemed to be the hope of extreme right European parliamentarians led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, whose enthusiasm knew no bounds.

Television teams had been filtered and instructed by the conservative presidium to keep the cameras on Reagan. There were only brief glimpses of the silent protest of European parliamentarians who held up signs with slogans like "Star Wars No" and "Hands Off Nicaragua." British Laborites, Benelux Socialists and part of the SPD contingent made up the bulk of the protesters, joined by Greens and some Italian Communists. French Socialists stayed to applaud Reagan and French TV reported that the demonstration was staged.

### Fallout.

Reagan left a bitter political debate in his wake in West Germany. His refusal to receive Willy Brandt—contrary to custom and tradition—was *carte blanche* to right-wing Christian Democrats like Heiner Geissler, CDU secretary, to step up McCarthyist attacks on the Social Democrats as "security risks" if not "Moscow's fifth column."

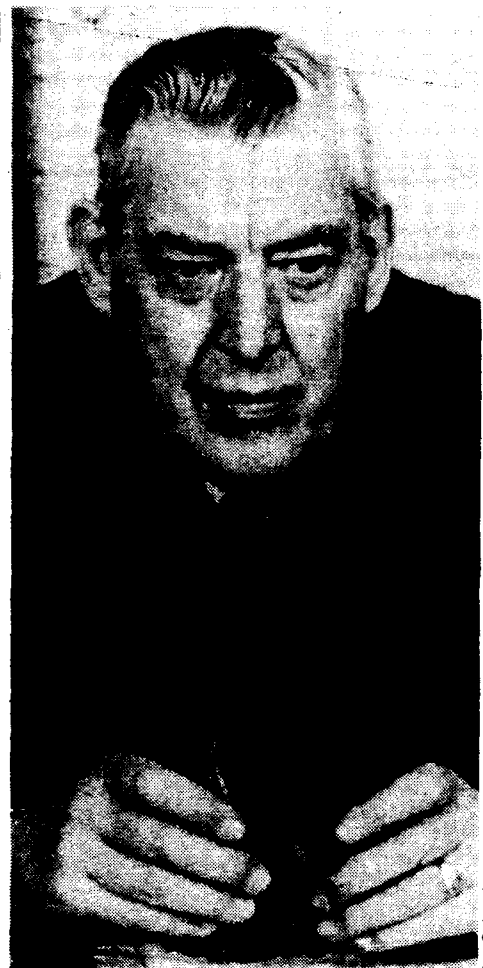
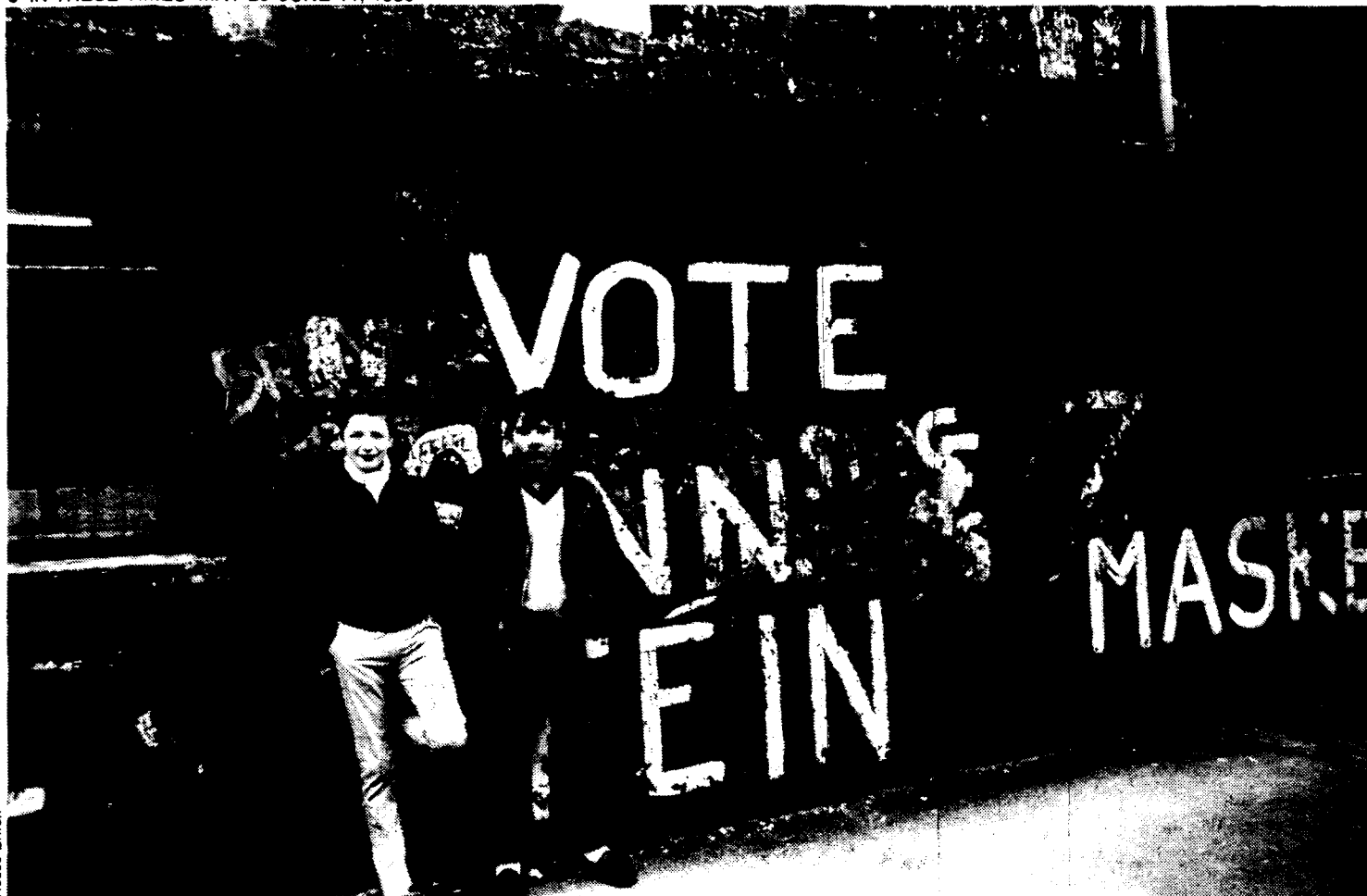
**Bonn summit seen by E.C. Representative Jacques Delors, former economics and finance minister under Mitterrand**

Brandt was outraged. As American officials from Richard Burt on down the line all denied having advised not to receive Brandt, the SPD continued to blame Chancellor Helmut Kohl for neglecting the rights of the opposition in his zeal to lead Reagan to Bitburg.

The SPD held its own commemoration of May 8 and invited the mayors of towns especially marked by Nazi atrocities—Lidice, Auschwitz, Oradour, Coventry and Rotterdam. Christian Democratic leaders denigrated this by saying the Social Democrats had chosen to "celebrate May 8 with Communists."

Continued on page 22





## NORTHERN IRELAND

# Sinn Fein in limelight following elections

By Donna De Cesare

BELFAST

**I**N AN ACCIDENTAL PIECE OF SCENE-stealing at Belfast City Hall, Sinn Fein Councillor Alex Maskey led the media right past the man who had topped the polls in his ward. Alex Atwood of the Social Democratic and Labor Party (SDLP) was neither the first nor the last front-runner to somehow find himself behind Sinn Fein (SF).

This political party, which supports the Irish Republican Army (IRA), is the fourth largest in Northern Ireland. Yet it was guaranteed limelight coverage, for a credible if undramatic showing in the local council elections, by unionist politicians whose campaigns were launched on a "Smash Sinn Fein" platform. It was just one of the election's many ironies.

In Belfast, Sinn Fein did well. It was one of four councils where the party gained more seats than the SDLP. The mood among supporters was jubilant. Up and down the winding ghetto streets of West Belfast, the Sinn Fein victory cavalcade gathered momentum. Blaring horns and headlights and numerous Irish flags surged as the darkness and rain lifted just enough to bring supporters onto the streets. From teeming alleyways in Ballymurphy to Dickensian streets in Beechmont, joy and pride were palpable as people raised their arms and cheered in Gaelic: *Tiocfaid ár lá*, our time has come.

But it hasn't, at least not yet. The SDLP has held its 60 percent of the nationalist vote to SF's 40 percent. At the height of Sinn Fein's electoral optimism, following the 1983 election of Gerry Adams to the British Parliament in Westminster, the party's stated goal was to prove itself the "undeniable voice" of Northern Ireland's nationalist community. The 1985 local council elections were to have been the electoral showdown. But after the defeat of SF candidate Danny Morrison at the hands of the SDLP's John Hume in last year's European Parliamentary election, the strategy changed. Assured of bedrock support from approximately 90,000 voters, Sinn Fein sought to establish a significant presence in council chambers.

According to SF councillor Alex Maskey, the goal of outpolling the SDLP has been postponed but not dropped. "We rec-

ognize ourselves that we made a bit of a blunder. From the Assembly election on we thought we could translate votes into council seats. But we didn't have a middle leadership. We now recognize that building a good solid organization will take a bit longer than we originally thought it would."

Having lowered their sights considerably, Sinn Fein has been able to declare the results a solid victory. Before the elections, Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams said that he would be satisfied if 35 SF councillors were elected. Most observers felt that Adams was deliberately underestimating the outcome. Now, with 59 councillors elected, representation on 17 of the 26 councils and control of the balance of power in six councils, Sinn Fein has proven its staying power, if nothing else.

"We went out to throw up a new public middle leadership," says Adams. "Before this election our party was dominated by five or six well-known personalities. I'm satisfied that our objective of consolidating the republican vote and showing that it was not illusory or temporary has been achieved."

In an attempt to steal Sinn Fein's thunder, the Rev. Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and James Molyneaux, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), signed a pact opposing the Anglo-Irish summits and Sinn Fein councillors in local government. Although there will be no unionist boycotts of councils other than the boycott in Derry that has been going for some time, it will not be clear how much fire is behind the thunder until the councils begin meeting. "We must recognize that we've a statutory duty to run these councils as democrats," says Paisley. "But we have no duty to fraternize with them [Sinn Fein], and we are going to see that they are kept out. They are going to be ostracized. There is no common ground."

DUP spokesman Sammy Wilson outlined some of the tactics the loyalists can employ to ensure a lack of consensus. In unionist-dominated councils, a walkout denying quorum can top SF motions without discussion. Even non-contentious motions could be stopped and then put forward at a later stage by a unionist councillor. That such tactics seem almost designed to give Sinn Fein maximum publicity seems to elude both the DUP and UUP.

On the other side of the coin, the pact virtually ensures that the majority nationalist party, the SDLP, will have to "dirty its hands" and work closely with Sinn Fein. This is particularly true in districts where the combined SF and SDLP seats would make a nationalist-controlled council. To unionist accusations that the SDLP has entered a pact with SF, the party leader John Hume responds by calmly stating that while his party continues to oppose violence and will not enter into pacts with anyone, it will support motions put forward by other parties based upon the merit of the motion. That comes as no surprise to Sinn Fein. Gerry Adams expects cooperation between the two parties on a range of issues, including the election of council chairs.

Perhaps most interesting has been the confused and contradictory reaction from the British and Irish governments. British Cabinet Minister Nicholas Scott was hard pressed to explain why there was no double standard involved in the government's decision not to meet with Sinn Fein councillors. He maintained that SF is not condemned because "its primary purpose is violence," yet he went on to say that as long as it supports violence, "it would be an insult to the people of Northern Ireland for government ministers to deal with them." Hedging the question of why there should be a separate standard for government ministers and locally elected councillors, he reiterated that taking away Sinn Fein's right to participate in elections was a much more serious step, which was not under consideration. Undoubtedly, the British government is concerned that a ban on Sinn Fein would only further increase its support.

Fein's successes have been predictable and, like those of the British government, contradictory. Addressing his party's annual

**Now, with 59 councillors elected, representation on 17 of the 26 councils and control of the balance of power in six councils, Sinn Fein has proven its staying power.**

**Rev. Ian Paisley (right), Democratic Unionist Party leader, signed a pact opposing Sinn Fein in local government.**

conference, Irish Prime Minister Dr. Garret FitzGerald called the Northern Irish election results an indication of "alienation" in the nationalist community. On his recent trip to North America, he pleaded with Irish-Americans not to support Sinn Fein or the IRA because they were "fascist" organizations. Yet, like the British government, his vision can be selective when it comes to violence. He doesn't seem to mind that the SDLP will be forced to do what his government hasn't the courage to do.

His attempt to balance his comments on Northern Ireland with condemnation of the well-established sectarian violence of the Ulster Defense Regiment (UDR) only angered unionists and, indeed, many republicans. Rejecting FitzGerald's comments as "crocodile tears," Gerry Adams accused the Dublin government of failing the Irish people. "FitzGerald protests over the UDR; he makes loud noises about the judicial system, about the RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary), plastic bullets and the shoot-to-kill policies. Yet his government collaborates fully with those same forces, and his government extradicts Irish people into the clutches of the very regime he hypocritically protests about."

There is no shortage of contradictions within the republican movement, either. In Derry, one of the city councillors elected is Gerald Doherty, a man who served seven and a half years for attempting to blow up the building in which he will now sit as a councillor.

He acknowledges no contradiction or irony in this. When asked about it just after winning the seat he said, "The situation in Derry City 13 years ago was an entirely different situation. Thirteen years ago I made a political statement by carrying a bomb into this building. I'm now making the same political statement today."

Rumors of splits within the movement that these contradictions fuel seem, at least for the moment, to have no firm basis. The election campaign went smoothly and successfully for Sinn Fein. Following it there was a land mine attack near the border in which four policemen and one policewoman were killed. The IRA immediately admitted responsibility. Yet whatever tensions do exist between the hard-line militarists and the political republicans seem under control. One need not agree with the "armalite and ballot box campaign" to recognize that it is this that keeps pressure on both the British and Irish government to seek a resolution.

If Garrett FitzGerald fails to gain anything in his next summit meeting with Margaret Thatcher, the republican end of the SDLP may begin to take an even more pragmatic view of Sinn Fein than it now must after these local elections.



**F**OURTEEN WEEKS HAVE PASSED since Arthur Scargill, president of Britain's National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) emerged from a delegate conference of his union on March 3 to confirm that the miners' strike had been called off. The emotions that had surfaced continually throughout the year-long strike rose to a pitch outside the British trade union headquarters in London that night. "We've given you our hearts, we've given you our blood, we've given you everything," shouted one miner from Scotland, "and then you sell us out."

The intervening period has been bleak in many respects for the strikers' cause. Since the mass return to work on March 5, the bitter debate over an amnesty for those dismissed by the National Coal Board (NCB) has continued. By early April, the number of formal dismissals stood at 620.

A final tally of arrests during the strike was quoted by the *New Statesman*, two weeks after the strike had been called off, at 11,312. In England and Wales alone, nearly 10,000 arrests had produced an 81 percent charge rate by mid-April. Charges are still being brought, and many cases remain to be heard.

Early moves for the closure of two collieries in particular, Frances in Scotland and Bedwas in South Wales, proceeded with minimal resistance from the workforce. Many miners have inquired about redundancies since the strike ended. Damage to coal faces as a result of not being worked for a year is considerable. Latest NCB figures suggest that more than 70 faces have been lost and more than 20 are in poor condition. An initial assessment on the strike's financial cost for the NUM was reckoned by Scargill at £150,000 per week, a total of more than £7 million. Recent union estimates put the figure far higher.

The union has also suffered defeat in a pithead ballot on a 50-pence-per-member levy to support dismissed strikers. In Nottinghamshire, where the majority of members continued working throughout the strike, the NUM area general secretary, Henry Richardson—a strike supporter—was dismissed following a ruling by the local area council. Richardson fought during the strike against members' defiance. His dismissal, along with mooted rule changes in the local union's constitution, marks a new stage in the shift to the right by Nottinghamshire and perhaps its break from the national union. In response, the national union plans for far-reaching changes in its constitution. These are aimed to pre-empt a recurrence of the Nottinghamshire miners' defiance and to protect the NUM against future legal actions foreseeable under stringent new trade union laws or as a result of dissident members challenging union decisions on an individual basis.

Within days of the return to work, NCB Chair Ian MacGregor was refusing to countenance an amnesty for miners charged with violence during the strike. "People are now discovering the price of insubordination and insurrection," MacGregor commented in an interview. "And boy," he added, "are we going to make it stick."

Meanwhile, pockets of resolve in the face of proposed pit closures can still be found in and around Britain's coal fields. The provisional Women Against Pit Closures (WAPC) formation, which brought much support to the strikers, appears ready to continue as a permanent national organization. The group is hoping to gain associate membership of the NUM—a proposal said to have met with resistance from certain quarters within the NUM executive, although rule changes allowing for some form of affiliation will be discussed at the union's annual conference in July. WAPC also has plans for educational schemes involving miners' wives and clearly aims to continue fighting closures.

The union of pit deputies, NACODS—which reached an agreement with the NCB last fall over a modified review procedure for collieries threatened by shutdown—has

claimed that the board is breaking its word by pushing for closures before the new procedure, involving an independent arbitration body, is even established.

Some 15 closures have been announced by the NCB since the strike ended. NACODS responded in mid-May by announcing a national overtime ban by its members. This will undoubtedly slow up a return to full production since coal cannot be cut unless pit deputies are on site in accordance with the industry safety regulations. NACODS has taken a consistently hard line with the NCB since the strike ended—a line that was conspicuously absent at critical points during the strike itself.

#### Broader implications.

This momentous episode in British labor history has broad implications beyond the coal industry, however. The last three months have witnessed a classic post-mortem. Everyone agrees on the significance of the conflict. In his book, *Scargill and the Miners*, journalist Michael Crick ranks it as one of the three most important historical moments in post-war Britain, along with the Suez crisis of 1956 and the Falklands war. What is remarkable about the strike's aftermath is the extent of common ground in editorials and commentaries on the left, and also the limited degree of re-creation. Nonetheless, the Labor Party leadership and the trade movement have come in for strong criticism from many quarters.

On March 21, the Labor Coordinating Committee (LCC), broadly representative of a left-of-center grouping within Labor, published a short paper entitled "After the Strike," advocating a thorough appraisal of the dispute. For LCC, the parliamentary emphasis of the Labor leadership's politics was a major weakness in the British left's approach to events. From the beginning, says LCC, the leadership acted "as if the strike was an embarrassing diversion from 'real politics' in Parliament and the electoral arena." The document adds: "The strike shows the foolishness...of separating extra-parliamentary from parliamentary struggles. Extra-parliamentary activity is part of the strategy for socialist transformation."

This kind of criticism had already been evident during the strike. *London Labor Briefing*, a metropolitan "hard left" publication, took a far tougher line all along,

calling for a general strike as well as vilifying Trade Union Congress General Secretary Norman Willis and Labor leader Neil Kinnock. "Whether we like it or not," wrote *London Labor Briefing* during the strike, "defeating the Tories means taking on Kinnock, Willis and Co. and beginning to break their grip on other sections of the working class."

Such an approach has raised such questions as what was possible and how far could the possible be extended? Undoubtedly, the NUM's militant style and tactics scared off a retrenched and supremely cautious labor movement, avid to deny the central tenet of Scargill's position: that the fate of the entire movement was tied to that of the miners in a titanic struggle between the forces of democracy and its enemies. The miners gambled on eventual backing from other unions, despite early evidence that it would not be forthcoming.

Any possibility of serious support from

IN THESE TIMES MAY 29- JUNE 11, 1985 9 left, its symbolic importance was greatly increased by the strike's overall bleakness. While government ministers lectured their well-heeled followers in elegant surroundings on the ills of organized labor during the summer and fall of 1984, men and women in the pit villages were eking out a meager existence, eating in soup kitchens, sinking into debt and preparing to scratch coal from the slag heaps—an activity with bitter pre-war connotations of poverty and deprivation. In this sense it often looked as though the only item on the British political agenda was graphic, protracted class warfare.

By year's end, the available ground of compromise, already minimal, had been decisively clipped away from beneath the feet of those who sought to occupy it, with the result that their position looked not only precarious but often foolish. Labor, in particular, seemed to have settled for an evasive crisis-management style in face of the

## BRITAIN

# After miners' strike: what next for labor?

the labor movement as a whole was probably a dead letter from October 1984 onward, when Scargill threw out a national compromise with the NCB, available on the basis of its deal with NACODS. Some have argued that this was a moment when the strike could have been adjourned with dignity, the rank and file spared the ordeal it was forced to endure for a further four months and the union, by now bitterly divided, restored to some semblance of unity. The loyalist element might then have regrouped for a long-term fight, which it would have been in better shape to prosecute. This theory, unlike the actual tissue of complexities that faced the miners at the time, has the dubious advantage of simplicity.

A general strike advocated by Labor left leader Tony Benn and others, was always the most fanciful possibility. But like other terms in the political vocabulary of the far

strike, shifting from one foot to the other as the miners grew more isolated.

According to Beatrix Campbell, journalist and author of *Wigan Pier Revisited*, Neil Kinnock was "walled up in Parliament and parliamentarism." Writing in the *New Statesman*, Campbell declared that Kinnock had "fallen for the fetish of the law"—a reference to violence on picket lines, which hampered the Labor Party's effort to espouse the strike while appearing to favor moderation. For Campbell, that violence was a symptom of the masculine response to confrontation rather than a simple law-and-order issue. She compares it unfavorably with peaceful defiance by women in support of the miners.

This gender emphasis is yet another reminder of the role women played in defending their communities. But it is those communities as a whole, in relation to other communities threatened by Thatcherism, that provide the crucial focus for Raymond Williams, writing in *New Socialist*. Reviewing the terminology so prevalent during the strike—in particular, the "right to manage," "law and order" and the notion of "uneconomic" pits invoked by the government—Williams concludes that the key question in Britain has become "the survival of all our communities."

On it, he writes, "the future of this society and, with it, of its labor movement and of any project for socialism will be decided. The point of growth for a reviving socialism is now in all these crisis-ridden communities..."

Seen in these terms, a generous domain of political practice opens out for the British left in the wake of the strike. It is one that would not be out of character with the rapid atomization of British society and British politics since 1979. It involves the consolidation of the extra-parliamentary option and the proliferation of new democratic forms at various local levels.

But Williams' perspective also makes sense of one significant feature of the strike: that the most committed support for the miners came not from the national, centralized political and labor institutions but from the political and cultural margins—from beleaguered left-wing councils running inner-city areas, from certain isolated sectors of the church, from women, from gays, from blacks who perceived a direct relation between police handling of the pickets and the nature of policing in their own areas—or, in other words, from other "crisis-ridden communities."

What should the British left conclude from these trends? Primarily, the real thrust—a socialism forged in the new communitarian bases—suggests a further isolation.

Continued on following page



Arthur Scargill, president of Britain's National Union of Mineworkers



*Continued from preceding page*

tion of the Labor and Trades Union Congress leaderships. It also suggests that the bulk of those energies released by the strike tend now toward diffuse grassroots activity away from any normative parliamentary agenda. Unless LCC's vision of a synthesis involving parliamentary and extra-parliamentary options is workable, this in turn can only imply further fragmentation for Labor itself—at the very moment when Kinnock's performance has begun to improve in opinion polls.

But the pull away from parliamentarism may be fraught with dangers. The miners' strike stands as the highest instance of polarization in Britain since the war. Public reaction to the strike shows, too, that the center in British politics remains available for the most credible taker. There are signs that Thatcherism as a radical project has peaked. The drive against autonomous local government, the obsession with welfare restructuring and privatization continue merely, though no less insidiously, as the half-life of Thatcherism. But it may well be that the government, having lost ground in a long ideological war—largely due to the NUM's resilience—will now be making gestures in the direction of the center.

It has been suggested that the NUM executive could have spared the British left this quandary, and the miners a deal of hardship, if it had played the cards another way. On two counts, Scargill has come in for criticism during and since the strike.

The first concerns his failure to hold an NUM national ballot on the strike; polls conducted among members at the time suggest that it would have been won by a comfortable margin. The second involves his steadfast refusal to condemn violence and intimidation against working miners by pickets. There is no way of knowing what the outcome would have been had a national ballot on the strike been conducted and won. But the likelihood that the Nottinghamshire men would have agreed to abide by a national majority and come out should not be underestimated.

On the question of violence, there can be no doubt that Scargill's stonewalling in one interview after another did no good for the strikers' cause. Indeed, it became all too easy for mass audiences to conclude from his public appearances that for the miners' president, violence by union members was a transcendent, heroic violence—justifiable in any circumstances.

Clearly, this made matters difficult for the center left—for Kinnock and others—in their efforts to support "the case for coal" and keep their eyes on a broad electoral revival. As it was, the debate on alternative energy policies and the arguments in favor of saving pit communities advanced by Labor were invariably undermined by the government's stress on violence and disorder by miners' pickets.

In *Marxism Today*, Hywel Francis argues that the strike "was above all the first major sustained national defense of jobs in Britain." That, Francis says, is new. He also points to the creation of an alternative welfare state, based on donations and au-

tonomous organization, as a major achievement. Finally, he emphasizes the rise of "local and regional broad democratic alliances." Such notions extend the purview of the strike well beyond the scenes of despair and exhaustion outside the TUC headquarters on March 3, when the return to work was decided.

The forms these alliances now take and the accommodation they seek within a wider political framework of mass trade unionism and parliamentary politics are crucial questions. If they remain unsettled for long, however, the miners' strike will simply be the sacrificial lamb in another ritual of abdication by the British left. ■

## Harassed

*Continued from page 5*

that their mail and telephone calls may be monitored.

She notes that on three occasions a CISPES chapter in southern California has discovered that a piece of mail it received had been routed through a local Internal Revenue Office. "Could it be a coincidence?" she asks. CCR has documented one case where two women, upon their return from Nicaragua, received notices that they were being audited by the IRS. The IRS denies that any of its audits are politically motivated.

One episode closer to the world of cloaks and daggers involves Sojourners, which sponsors programs that challenge U.S. policy in Central America. At 5:45 on a Satur-

day morning last fall, an early-rising staffer encountered four men at two back-door entrances to the group's office in Washington. One of the four had a camera. When the staffer asked what they wanted, one replied that they had come to visit the office. Then they left, with one saying they would return when it wasn't so early.

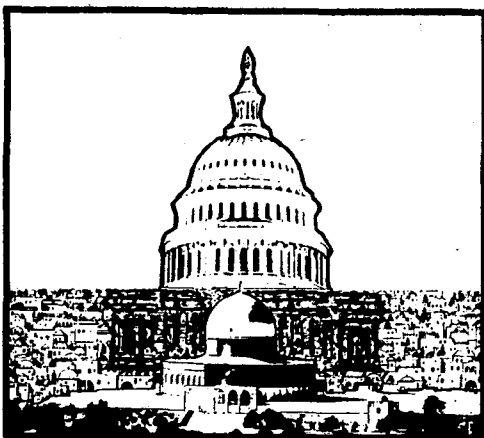
The Sojourners staff member wrote down the Virginia license plate number of their car and passed it on to the police, who promised to report back. When the police did not call, a Sojourners member contacted the police. He was told that because there was no evidence a crime was committed the police could not reveal to whom the car was registered. Meanwhile, separate inquiries conducted through other channels, including some congressional offices, found that Virginia's motor vehicle had no record of such a license plate, claims Dennis Marker of Sojourners.

The alleged FBI harassment has caused CCR to consider reviving a lawsuit it brought in 1982 charging that President Reagan's executive order expanding the authority of the FBI and CIA to conduct foreign counterintelligence operations in the U.S. is illegal. The suit was dismissed because it did not contain complaints from persons who claimed they suffered damages. Now CCR has specific complainants.

The FBI may have inflicted a black eye or two upon itself with the Haase case and its visits to U.S. travellers to Nicaragua. But while it might have had to circle its wagons recently, the FBI has steadfastly refused to admit any wrongdoing. "My view is that the government ought to forthrightly acknowledge they can't do what they did to Haase," Ratner says. Regarding the revived lawsuit, he adds, "We want an order prohibiting the FBI from conducting investigations based merely on the political views and opinions of an individual."

Such an order will not come in the near future. In the meantime, U.S.-Nicaraguan relations are likely to worsen. That being the case, the question for dissidents remains, will pressure on the home front rise as the administration tries to increase its pressure on Managua? ■

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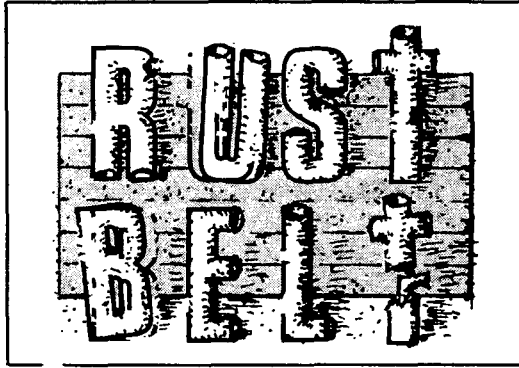
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# LIFE AFTER



By David Moberg

ROCK ISLAND, IL

**E**IGHTEEN MEN AND ONE WOMAN, all one-time makers of tractors for International Harvester, sat stolidly in their chairs in the sterile corporate meeting room. Some had not worked at Harvester for two years. All had felt a blow of shattering finality when they were told last November that the Farmall works where they had labored would be shut down in the aftermath of Harvester's sale of its agricultural implement division to the Tenneco conglomerate. Despite the Garfield the Cat banner pronouncing that "there is life after IH," some of these workers weren't so confident.

As they sat through a job placement training session jointly sponsored by the company and their union, the United Auto Workers (UAW), their feelings about the shutdown, the company, the union and themselves came out often as monosyllabic bursts. "Fired. Cheated. Programmed. What's phase two?" All the survivors, they chorused. "Sold out. Dumb. Duped. Good while it lasted. Worried. 'I lost respect for myself, put it that way.' Loss of self-confidence. Alone. Depressed. Angry. I feel lost. I don't know what to do—especially with the job market the way it is. You don't feel in no condition to go out and look."

In early 1983 one-fifth of the workforce was officially unemployed in the Quad Cities, the inextricably linked complex of Rock Island, Moline and East Moline on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River and Davenport on the Iowa side, along with 10 other small towns in this metropolitan area of about 400,000.

Today at the peak of a national economic recovery the official unemployment rate is 11.4 percent—and several points higher on the Illinois side. That does not take into account a net loss of 4-5,000 people who have left the area in the last few years nor thousands who have dropped from official listings into the black holes labeled welfare, early retirement, discouraged worker or involuntary part-time work. It also does not include people like Bobby Gonzales, who not long ago made \$10.69 an hour at a meatpacking plant and now makes slightly more than the minimum wage at McDonald's.

The Quad Cities have long been a manufacturing center, the "farm implement capital" that also produced construction equipment, army artillery and other factory goods. The experiences here are not unlike those in many other cities of the Rust Belt,

battered by job loss, plant closings and manufacturing decline.

But there is nothing rusty about the Farmall plant in Rock Island that employed 4,200 workers in 1979. It does not fit the popular image of an outmoded factory producing "low-tech" products in an outdated manner—an appropriate victim of the readjustment to post-industrial America. Although part of it was first opened in the '20s, listen to UAW Local 1309 President William Bowling's description: "Inside most of it doesn't look like an old plant. It's as clean as a motel. Most of the equipment is new. There are lots of robots in there. In the department I worked in, one worker would run six machines—numerically controlled lathes with robot gauging—so if the part was bad it would automatically drop it in a separate container."

In recent years Harvester had invested \$225 million in this plant, including a fully automated new warehouse, in part paid for by worker concessions and public aid, such as bonds issued by the city of Rock Island. The parent of the I-I Case farm equipment company, paid only \$260 million plus \$170 million in preferred stock for the entire Harvester farm equipment operation in North America and the United Kingdom.

Harvester may be a distinctive case, a sorry tale of the decline of one of the oldest and largest corporations in the U.S. Bungling management weakened Harvester especially, but the entire farm equipment industry—and only slightly less the heavy construction equipment industry—remains bruised and battered, operating at well below half of a shrunk capacity.

It is the victim, above all, of a deep slump to Depression-era levels of farm income coupled with heavy debt loads and high interest rates that discourage even the most secure farmer from popping \$100,000 for a new combine or giant tractor. It is also the victim of the strong dollar that cuts exports, encourages imports, provides incentive to U.S. companies to move production overseas and dampens export markets for farm products.

## Management's role.

Yet the farm equipment industry management has also contributed to the crisis of communities like Rock Island. Implement manufacturers encouraged and benefitted from the Earl Butzian imperative to farmers to "get big or get out" as they promoted ever more powerful machinery suitable for the biggest farms. Yet concentration in

farming reduces the number of farms and the potential for unit sales. More important, increasingly they manufactured in North America only the very big tractors of 100 horsepower and more, shifting more of their production of small or medium-sized tractors to Japan, Europe or Third World nations in joint ventures or on their own.

Now virtually all tractors under 100 hp are imported, often as "captives" with U.S. nameplates, and there are gradual import incursions into the larger ranks. (Of 117,734 tractors sold last year, 51,040 were less than 40 hp, but many were used for nurseries, mowing and other uses off the farm.)

The greatest cause for the loss of 60,000 farm implement jobs since 1979, by UAW estimates, is the reduction in sales by more than half. But factory automation has also taken its toll. Even for good times, farm implement manufacturing capacity was too high, given the shift in production overseas. For example, the two million square foot Farmall plant running full blast on two shifts could have by itself produced all the tractors of 40 hp and over sold in the U.S. last year. But the robotization that came with recent investment may not even be as efficient as managers believe.

Bowling, who obviously had a stake in keeping people on the job, said, "I argued that one worker could outproduce robots two or three to one. But they chose robots. I ran a set of two machinists and the latest numerical control equipment. The robot line had the same. I looked at what the robot line produced and what I produced and it was three to one. I think it was show robots are the latest thing."

The strong dollar exacerbates trends already underway for both farm and construction equipment. Caterpillar, maker of the famous yellow earthmoving machines, recently announced it would move two of its production lines from its Davenport plant to existing factories in Glasgow, Scotland and Grenoble, France, largely because of unfavorable exchange rates.

The Farmall closing, closely followed by Caterpillar's decision and the shuttering of downtown Rock Island's old, established department store, gave a new urgency to the region's crisis late last fall. Until then many had viewed the area's economic problems as another, if prolonged, cyclical downturn. Now they appear more threatening. In recent weeks, as the last tractor rolled off the line at Farmall, the last unemployment checks went out to most laid-off Farmall workers.

Bowling, who says he's 45 but feels like  
*Continued on following page*

# INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER





*Continued from preceding page*

85, was in "total shock" when he heard the factory was closing. Two days earlier he had been told production of a cottonpicker would be shifted from Memphis to Rock Island, and Harvester had just started prototype production of a new tractor series. But the hardest part of the past six months for him was fighting for—and not getting—the federal extension of unemployment benefits this spring.

"The most critical thing is when you stop a weekly paycheck for a worker," he said. "People who have worked 20 to 25 years come in and ask for help and you can't do anything."

There is a deep sense of frustration from local business offices to food pantries about the difficulty in doing something "when decisions are made elsewhere—the strong dollar, big deficit, stupid embargo," Quad City Development Group Director Richard Weeks said.

Yet some actions have been taken. After food pantries and counseling services were first established, now the unemployed themselves are beginning to organize, but on a small scale. Churches have begun to move beyond serving individual welfare to advocating a more just economy. Farm implement workers here and throughout the Midwest have linked arms with farmers fighting foreclosures, and the UAW has emerged as a major advocate of legislation favored by the left of the farm movement. Locally unions have thrown themselves into politics, especially since collective bargaining has been concerned mainly with limiting concessions and caring for the wounded, helping various liberal Democrats to win office. Most important, last year they helped elect young "populist" Rep. Lane Evans to his second term in Congress in a traditionally Republican district.

Yet at the same time many workers are depressed, preoccupied with personal survival or seeking escape into anything but politics. In an employer's market, wages are pushed down as thousands of workers apply for a few new job openings paying less than half of what they made previously. There is a mad scramble in any and all directions for new sources of jobs: city developers are even promoting tourism and travel, the usual desperate ploy, even though the most promising prospects are a few more riverboat rides on the Mississippi.

To their credit, local development authorities are not chasing the high-tech rainbow but recognize, as Weeks said, that "agricultural and industrial equipment will still be the basis of our economy," although they will generate far fewer jobs even when recovery returns. The Quad Cities may be able to capitalize on an increased interest among the big manufacturers, like John Deere, Caterpillar and J.I. Case, in "just-in-time manufacturing," the Americanized version of Japanese *kanban*. That means such companies stock low inventories and expect quick delivery—just in time for its uses—from suppliers, who will have incentive to locate closer to their markets. Recently a company making electric harnesses for farm and construction equipment relocated in Davenport for that reason.

Yet there is a widespread and somewhat contradictory impulse to diversify the economic base so that the area relies less heavily on a few major industries. In 1979, 30 percent of the workforce was in manufacturing, well above the national average of 22 percent. More than half of those jobs were in farm and construction equipment. By 1984, according to Garold Wilson, a labor market economist with the Illinois Department of Employment Security, manufacturing employment for the area had dropped from 52,000 to 32,000—24 percent of the workforce—and half the drop came from farm and construction equipment. (Some manufacturing thrives. Both the Rock Island Arsenal—a beneficiary of Reagan's arms buildup—and an Alcoa Aluminum factory have hired several

thousand additional workers in recent years.) Yet manufacturing has a clear financial appeal for local economic recovery: the average manufacturing wage in Rock Island this year is \$553 a week, and the average for all jobs is \$325 a week.

Like nearly every city in the Midwest, the Quad Cities made a bid for General Motors' (GM) Saturn plant and even supported a proposal from nearby Galesburg for it. But development officials put more hope in small business, and Rep. Evans recently co-sponsored federal legislation that would make it possible for the unemployed to receive their benefits as a lump sum when they are laid off. A similar plan has been tried—reportedly with some success—in Europe in recent years.

And unemployed workers being organized through the union-supported Project Assist are talking about the unemployed pooling their benefits to start a business. One idea: starting their own temporary employment agency that would not rake off such a high percentage of the worker's pay. For the benefit of the big companies especially, development officials are trying to get the area declared a port of entry and a foreign trade zone (so companies can import parts duty-free and incorporate them into a final product that would then be exported).

### Harvester's history.

The story of Harvester indicates how much the private economic decisions of large corporations—and even of a few incompetents at its helm—can devastate communities and workers who have no voice in those deliberations.

Harvester, which early in this century was the seventh largest U.S. corporation, originated with Cyrus McCormick's invention of a workable mechanical reaper in 1831. Eventually locating operations in Chicago, McCormick Harvesting Company was a corporate pioneer—the first implement dealer to offer installment buying, a developer of modern centralized corporate structure and a mechanical innovator. After years of cutthroat competition—dubbed the Harvester Wars—the McCormicks managed to emulate the great steel and oil trusts of the turn of the century and established International Harvester in 1902, controlling 80-90 percent of production of some key equipment.

The McCormicks had already established themselves as ruthless in dealing with labor. Police shooting McCormick Reaper strikers precipitated the famous Haymarket rally and massacre in 1886, and the company was willing to introduce—at a loss—new automated equipment in order to break the Molder's Union.

Despite competition from Deere—which established the first major steel plow factory in Moline in 1847—from Ford and many other implement makers, Harvester dominated the farm machinery market. Its

organized, most of them by the militant FE.

After World War II, UAW President Walter Reuther led the move to expel the FE from the CIO as a Communist-led union after the FE's bid for merger with the UAW was rejected. The two unions vied for worker loyalties, pushing for better contracts. In 1950 the UAW won better terms than FE did. But when the FE returned to bargaining in 1952, it faced a management that was especially ideologically hostile and a public climate of red-baiting.

In the middle of the FE strike, the company opened the plants and successfully appealed to workers to break the strike. Having lost automatic check-off of dues and rights for its stewards, the FE was further crippled, much to the open delight of Harvester executives. In 1953 FE locals switched to the UAW, but the militancy remained. One victory of the time: a prohibition of compulsory overtime.

At the same time, Harvester was losing its lead to Deere, which capitalized on the postwar wave of farm consolidations and exodus of farmers by marketing bigger tractors for the growing farms of the Eisenhower era. Harvester executives tried to recoup their position by expansion in construction equipment, trucks, even home refrigerators.

Harvester's empire scattered. At times it was burdened with old facilities or acquisitions—such as the Wisconsin Steel Company, bought to outfox the steel trust—that no longer made much sense. Harvester executives began shutting old factories, and in 1978 sold Wisconsin Steel to a small, non-steel company in an ill-conceived deal to escape its pension liabilities. Like its competitors, Harvester had expanded overseas in the '60s and '70s, and by the end of the decade one-third of its sales came from those overseas subsidiaries.

### Confrontation.

In 1977 Harvester chief executive Brooks McCormick, a descendant of the founder's family, looked outside corporate ranks for expert advice and what seemed to be a hot-shot new president, Archie McCardell of Xerox Corp. McCardell negotiated a handsome deal: \$1.5 million up-front, a salary of \$460,000 a year and a \$1.8 million loan to purchase Harvester stock that would be forgiven if the company did well. With other outsiders, McCardell started a rash campaign of cost-cutting and capital spending, much of which rankled staff familiar with production and may have been introduced too rapidly to be used well.

The rabid cost-cutting of McCardell and associates led to a dramatic confrontation with the UAW in 1979 over many long-cherished work rules won in the earlier militant era. McCardell wanted more shifts, fewer transfers and mandatory overtime on Saturday. Workers responded with a six-

**The Harvester story indicates how much large corporations' private economic decisions can devastate communities and workers with no voice in their deliberations.**

month strike that largely succeeded. Yet the company-provoked strike not only cost heavily and led to the collapse of Wisconsin Steel, but also was not even relevant.

Soon afterward demand collapsed, and there wasn't need for even the shifts already scheduled, let alone overtime. McCardell persuaded the board that he had been doing such a good job that his loan should be forgiven in advance. But the strike—a link with Harvester's heritage of anti-union action—sent an already shaky company tumbling downhill at a time when it could not afford it. Truck and farm implement sales dropped, profits plummeted, capital spending was curtailed and interest costs soared. Yet despite the deep losses, dividends in-

creased and McCardell was rewarded.

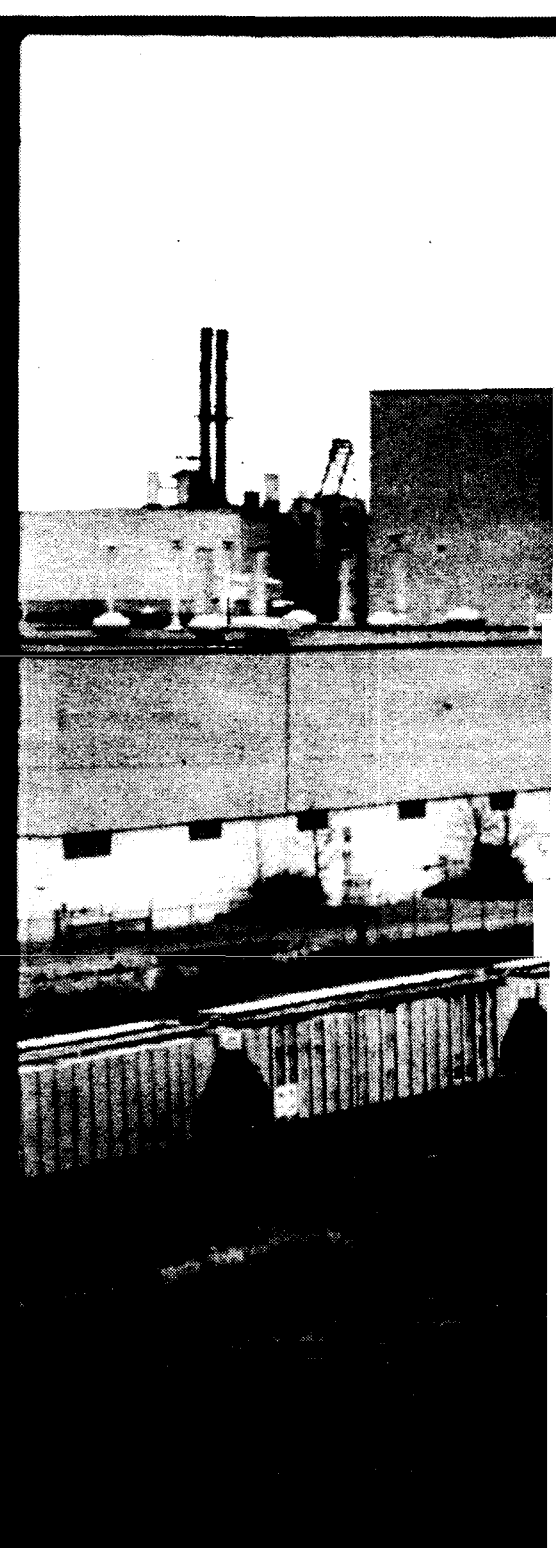
In desperation, top management flipped from one strategy to another, attempting to hold off creditors and demoralizing workers and lower-level management. In 1981 the company was near bankruptcy but worked out refinancing with its banks. Yet it accelerated its divestment of less-profitable divisions and its closing of plants.

One victim was the Fort Wayne, Ind., truck plant, originally opened in 1922 after the city raised \$1 million from local residents and built roads, tracks and sewers to lure Harvester in a bidding war resembling the current Saturn competition. The 10,500-worker plant anchored the town and its suppliers, but Harvester decided in 1982 that it would operate only one truck plant. Springfield, Ohio's bid was more attractive. The Fort Wayne plant closed. Despite its lavish treatment of executives and stockholders, Harvester also demanded more than \$100 million in concessions from UAW workers. Despite the givebacks, layoffs and plant closings continued.

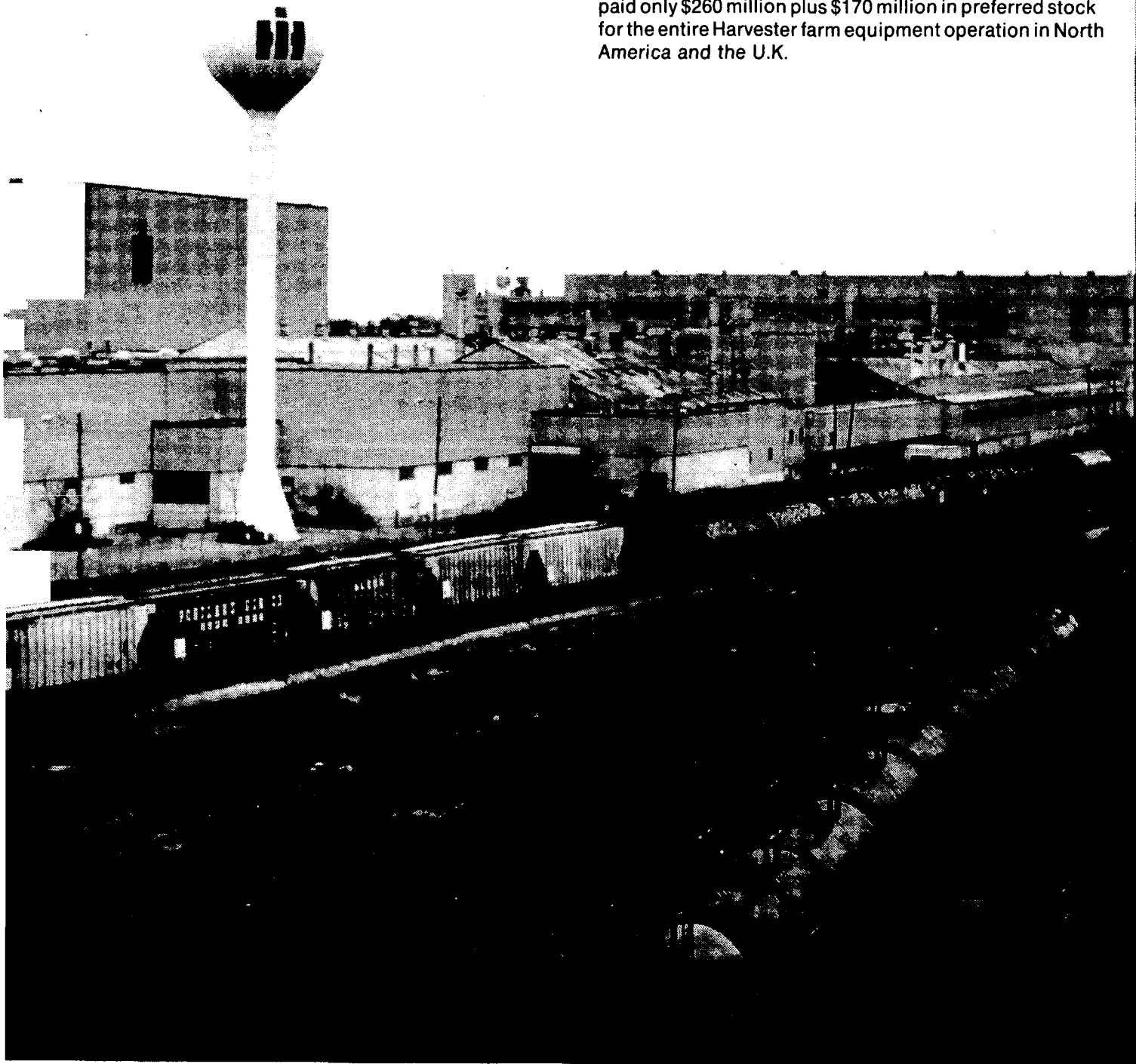
When Tenneco bought Harvester's agricultural implement division last year, it was clear that using some of Farmall's new equipment J.I. Case could produce all the tractors it could possibly sell at its Racine factory. Once again, as in the case of the truck plant, one Rust Belt city may have gained, while another lost. But in the long run, the region is losing.

In addition to moves overseas, retrenchment and robots, there are the traditional shifts to the South. Later this year, for example, American Air Filter, a Moline division of Allis-Chalmers, will move its 400-worker operation to Tennessee, despite the theoretical appeals of just-in-time delivery to its local buyers. The reason, according to Machinist business representative Tom Stockton, is cheaper labor—benefit costs will be roughly one-third less—and a less militant union.

"My real cause of concern in our whole 'rust belt' situation is we are slowly and surely losing the ability to produce the goods we used to," Stockton said. "People







In recent years International Harvester invested \$225 million in this Rock Island, Ill., plant alone and the Tenneco Co. paid only \$260 million plus \$170 million in preferred stock for the entire Harvester farm equipment operation in North America and the U.K.

aren't making products any more. Computers design, computers produce. We are losing our lifeblood as an industrial nation. We are not developing the kinds of people we need in this country."

He worries in particular that the younger, better-educated people are leaving. "To remove those assets from this community is a crime," he said. Only one of his four children could find a job in the Quad-Cities. The youngest just left for Florida. "I don't want her to go. Her mother doesn't want her to go," he said. "But she can't find work."

#### More trouble ahead.

Such losses are likely to continue, in part because management sees skilled labor less as a resource than as a threat and prefers computers or more docile, low-wage workers overseas. Yet in theory such skilled workers should be a national treasure that would permit the U.S. to shift unskilled work to Third World countries while retaining jobs like making advanced agricultural equipment for home and abroad.

Unfortunately for them, some of the Farmall workers were trained for their specific jobs and machines. Now they do not have the expertise—knowledge of blueprint reading, for example—to move on, if there were jobs. It is a painful reminder of why unions fight for seemingly archaic skilled trades classifications in factories. In that way the worker "owns" some property, his or her skill, and is less dependent on the company.

Meanwhile, the companies are trying to become less dependent on them. Deere and Company is the strongest in the industry, but it still reported a net loss of \$28 million for the first quarter of 1985 as farm equipment sales dropped by 20 percent from even last year's low level. Yet it has been cutting its break-even point and introducing more manufacturing cells, computer-aided design and manufacturing, and new organization of inventory and the flow of materials. It continues to pursue what its chief economist Dean McKee describes as

worldwide rationalization of production and wait for recovery, which he doesn't expect even in 1986.

But stock analysts note that low operating levels push prices upward, as they did in the early '80s, making it harder for farmers to buy even if they had money. The middle-sized market is collapsing, while tractors over 200 hp and small tractors do better. But those small tractors are all imported. In 1983 the U.S. farm machinery industry became a net importer for the first time, further worsening the nation's horrendous balance of trade.

"The shift toward the use of foreign-made implements on American farms is rapid," Moody's Industry Surveys reported recently. "Tractor production during [1982-1983] was down 46 percent to 32,400 units, generally as a result of the transfer of production of 40-100 horsepower units offshore. Only 4,000 of these models were produced domestically in 1983, compared with 15,000 the year before. Not unexpectedly, the number of imported units rose to 39,500 in 1983, from 20,000 in 1982."

Imports of parts also increased. So Moody's long-term forecast is bleak: shrinking numbers of farms in the U.S., more manufacturing of farm equipment in countries such as South Korea, India and Mexico.

#### Workers' response.

How do—and should—workers respond? Kermit Stephenson, 42, worked 22 years at Farmall. "Now it's like a void. A lot of people in this area have had generations working in that plant. My mother and father, my wife's father worked there."

But when the closing was announced, he decided to start cleaning and fixing up offices and homes with his wife. Before he made \$13 an hour with benefits; now he makes an average of \$6 an hour with no benefits. When he reported he was trying to start his own business, his unemployment benefits were cut off. But he liked the idea of working for himself, and he saw few prospects for other jobs. "I've lived

here all my life," he said. "I thought I'd try to make it on my own."

Jim Jacobsen, 54, has been laid off for nearly two years from Caterpillar, then his wife lost her job at a local hospital. Now they survive on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), but that expires in June when their youngest child graduates. "I'm no longer considered unemployed," he said. "I'm a non-person. I'm dead meat in June."

Last fall he came to Project Assist, which Sharon De Frieze pulled together with federal job training funds, union support and token funds from local government and the United Way after she lost her job as a union project employee. Although he came for help in finding a job, he stayed on to become a leader representing the unemployed, included holding a seat on the local Private Industry Council.

Once a political independent, he now leans more to Democrats, especially since he sees Reagan's programs as being "at the expense of the American worker. He is creating a two-class society. He can find \$14 million for what he calls freedom fighters in Nicaragua, but he can't come up with money for farmers or for social programs. I'd just like to get a decent-paying job so I can support my wife. There's no way I can keep my house working for McDonald's. I don't have much hope for my son."

Eddie Hoskins, 33, has had a few part-time jobs since he was laid off by Harvester two years ago. Now most of his hope is "in the Lord." He is desperately seeking a "secure job," so he can pay child support and keep his family together. A few months ago his wife and he were close to splitting, and he ran away with his daughter to Texas. Now they're back together, but he is worried: "My little girl had a fever last week, and I should have taken her to the hospital. I would have if I'd had a job or insurance. But now I've got to worry about having more bills."

Hoskins blames bad management, high wages, the general economy and greed for

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Farmall's closing. He thinks both that the union pushed wages up and that now "there's no strength in the union." He muses inconclusively that "the U.S. has always prospered in a war, but we're too afraid to go into war now because of nuclear weapons."

But he pays no attention to politics. "I couldn't vote when I went to Vietnam," he said. "So why should I vote now? I'm a born-again Christian. I believe God will put whoever he wants in office. What turned me to religion was being laid off. I hadn't been going to church. I had no job. I had bills. So I decided to take my burden to the Lord."

Tom Kalshoven, a minister who directs the ecumenical Churches United, thinks that society should share some of that burden. Over the past two-and-a-half years Churches United has provided 15 food pantries strategically located throughout the area. Last October Kalshoven initiated a task force on the economy, which held a conference for religious leaders and the community. Ministers are traditionally preoccupied with church duties and with individual service, but Kalshoven wants them to go further.

"Work is essential to self-understanding, and one must not take away the tools of one's work for artificial profit," he argues. "Christians have a civic responsibility to work for an economically just society and not just a charitable society."

He worries that the unemployed withdraw and isolate themselves from churches and the community and that the churches have been too closely identified with business. "Traditionally, churches identify with the community through the 'business climate' community, and suddenly you have the community of need developing. Standing with the corporate powers, that's always been easy. Many churches are structured hierarchically, and it makes it easier to relate to corporate hierarchy. Church hierarchy often makes it difficult to relate to those lacking power."

The church is a model of consolidation of power, he continues. "But the saving grace is that the church has self-understanding that it is of all the people. How do we understand 'community'? If we don't include unemployed people as well as the banker, we have pretty poor theology."

While Kalshoven is fighting for the church's soul, Machinist Stockton and unemployed organizer DeFrieze are in their own related way fighting for workers' minds. "It's difficult for unemployed people to come together collectively," DeFrieze said, "because they've been brought up on the work ethic that you solve your problems yourself." But the conservative cultural winds have worsened that tradition.

"I preach the gospel of liberalism every chance I get," Stockton said, "because they're not just messing with our money. They're messing with our heads."

To his members working at Rock Island arsenal, Stockton carries the message against nuclear weapons and the arms build-up. "It bothers me to sit here and be a realist, get my savings, remodel my home, when a senile SOB in Washington could blow it all up." But he also works hard on elections and other political education. "I do see more of our laid-off people becoming active. We recently had a Care-and-Share plan collecting canned goods and money for distribution to the unemployed. There were large contributions from our members. Any way you cut that, that's political."

#### Lane Evans.

One of Stockton's happiest election victories was Lane Evan's win. Evans has campaigned for human services programs, called for legislation to count the unemployed more accurately, attacked Reagan plans to end revenue sharing as a backdoor local tax increase and a blow to local development. He says he works in the short run for cushioning aid—such as farm credit or supplemental unemployment benefits—and plays the role of advocate of the district and its less fortunate, steering

Continued on page 22



## EDITORIAL



## The Goode Vietnam syndrome

*The raid will not be swift and it will not be clean. It's gonna be a mess. If MOVE go down, not only will everybody in this block go down, the knee joints of America will break and the body of America will soon fall.*

*We going to burn them with smoke, gas, fire and bullets. We will bring this house down and burn you up with us.*

Ramona Africa, sole adult survivor of the MOVE bombing in Philadelphia

The above is part of the text of a letter received by the city of Philadelphia two days before the police attacked MOVE headquarters and fulfilled Ramona Africa's prophesy. As a statement of intent, it more properly should have been written by Philadelphia's chief of police, or by its mayor, Wilson Goode. In the days after the bombing of the MOVE house, which killed seven adults and four children and resulted in the burning of 53 row houses, both the mayor and the police chief repeatedly talked about MOVE as if it were

a mortal danger, a threat to the stability of American society (see page 3).

"I surmised," Goode said, referring to requests from residents of the neighborhood that the city do something about MOVE's unwanted presence, "that someone would become so frustrated that they would attack

the house. The whole block was in danger of blowing up and a lot of innocent people would die." So, to save the neighborhood, Goode took matters into his own hands.

But despite all the claims that MOVE was tunneling the neighborhood, that there were explosives in the house, that MOVE

members have threatened to kill the mayor, it should have been obvious from their rhetoric and from their past actions that, no matter how obnoxious they were to their neighbors, they posed no immediate threat to anyone but themselves. And, of course, in the rubble of their building no tunnels have been found, no explosive devices—only three shotguns, a rifle and some unexploded ammunition.

The police action in Philadelphia has little or nothing to do with legitimate response to criminal activity or with protection of the community. It much more resembles the practice originated in Vietnam of destroying hamlets in order to save the population from contamination by the enemy. Even the disinformation campaigns seem similar. The police chief claims that the fire was started by MOVE members in the house, despite the fact, noted by Goode, that TV coverage showed the bomb starting the fire. Furthermore, neighbors have said that they saw MOVE members hoisting five-gallon cans marked "gasoline" up to the roof bunker the week before the police attack, something the police must also have seen.

The long-standing feud between the police and MOVE seems to have played a large part in the reckless viciousness of the city's attack. But our current political climate also played a part. It was only logical that U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese should praise Goode and comment that "the public has got to know from the top public officials available that the situation that gave rise to the tragedy was caused by the criminals, not the police." After all, wasn't it his boss who recently implied that the deaths of 20 South African blacks killed by the police may have been their own faults?

## Is the tax reform real?

Beset with a series of significant defeats—in his Central American policy, on his recent European trip and on military spending—President Reagan is now trying to recoup his losses by continuing his initiative for tax reform.

His original proposal, or, rather, that of then-Treasury Secretary Donald Regan, would indeed have made sweeping reforms in the tax code and overall would have constituted a major step in the direction of greater tax equity by eliminating many of

the ways by which the wealthy avoid paying taxes.

As AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland commented in March, "Insofar as the Treasury's recommendations take the poor off the tax rolls and put corporations and wealthy tax avoiders on, they represent a major step in the direction of tax justice."

But Kirkland also had some criticisms and suggestions with which we agree. He suggested that any restructuring of the tax system should enhance progressivity—unlike the Reagan tax cuts, which overwhelmingly favored the wealthy on the false theory that tax incentives would stimulate productive investment. The need now is not to freeze the status quo in the distribution of tax burdens, but to cut sharply taxes for lower-income workers and sharply to increase the taxes paid by the wealthy—especially those who have been the beneficiaries of the myriad of special exemptions and deductions.

But while the original Reagan proposal promised to do just this, more recent changes in the tax revision bill that President Reagan is to present to Congress this week indicate that his close friends and supporters will not be included in the reforms. Thus, tax preferences for the oil industry have been partially restored and the lower capital gains tax provision has been restored, at a lower level than the current 20 percent maximum. In addition, rapid depreciation allowances for capital investments have been reinstated and tax breaks for the real estate industry have been restored. These are precisely the kinds of loopholes that have allowed the wealthy to shift the burden of taxation onto middle-income working people.

Even so, the Reagan proposal will be presented as a major reform, and it will make the tax code simpler, which means that from a procedural standpoint it will be a positive change. The problem, however, is not procedural, it is a question of equity

and of policy. On the question of equity, the thing to look for is who will be paying more taxes and who less.

The Reagan proposal reduced the top bracket from 50 percent to 35 percent, but originally would have gotten more taxes from those in that bracket by eliminating loopholes. Many of these have apparently been restored. They should once more be eliminated. Likewise, taxes on those with lower incomes have been reduced, but it is not clear whether fringe benefits—health insurance and other non-cash benefits—will be taxed under the plan. If so, many working people will end up paying as much or more than they do now.

There is also the question of "revenue neutrality." The Reagan plan will not increase overall tax revenues, even though the Reagan tax cuts were a major cause of runaway deficits. And the Democrats are apparently unwilling or unable to challenge the president on this, instead preferring to go along with at least some of his additional cuts in social services.

This is a major issue on which the Democrats could take a stand if they were willing to defend increased revenues through increased taxation of the wealthy. As Kirkland pointed out, insistence on revenue neutrality in effect prevents the use of closed loopholes to reduce the deficit. All it will do under the Reagan plan, if it does anything, will be to distribute more evenly among the wealthy the portion of taxes they now pay. But the deficit should be reduced through increased tax revenues from those who benefit most from federal protections and subsidies—namely the owners of Corporate America—as well as from reductions in military spending.

Meanwhile, the Democrats can't decide whether to move to the left or to the right, even though the American people have clearly moved to their left in regard to military spending and Central American policy. It is our guess that on taxes, too, a large majority of Americans would like to see our Corporate rulers pay more, and to have Congress use that increased revenue to reduce the deficit in preference to further cuts in social services.

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## Premeditated?

IT IS ASTONISHING HOW PREMEDITATED IS the failure of President Reagan's foreign policy in Central America. He opposes communism in that region, but only after allowing it to come into being. He loves hating communism too much to try to prevent its development. It is too late in the case of the Nicaraguans—they gave up waiting. Adlai Stevenson warned about this kind of blunder when he said, "We know, too, how easy it is to mistake genuine local revolt for communist subversion."

Supporting military governments that scare their citizens out of making healthy political or economic reforms is the worst way and not the best way to undermine Soviet influence. The error is to fear communism more than you trust democracy, or to protect citizens from their enemies at a time in their history when they all seem like enemies.

To stop thinking in terms of oppression alone and interpret every complaint as a Russian plot, will only corrupt a vigorously democratic process—and eventually invite outside influences. Haven't the Reaganites invited the Soviets into Central America? But who could expect this American President to see the difference between mere patriotism and true diplomacy, or the foreign limitations on old clichés? If statesmen become so ingeniously political that they can no longer retreat to military behavior, will Reagan judge that as a failure of diplomacy?

L.S. Cattarini  
Toronto, Ontario

## Too obvious

IT IS ALMOST TOO OBVIOUS TO STATE, BUT economic support of South Africa is support for apartheid. Sophisticated technology and foreign capital makes it possible for 4.5 million whites to control and exploit 20 million blacks. IBM, NCR, Sperry and Burroughs computers are used to monitor the movements of the black population and to run the passbook system. U.S. oil companies provide about 40 percent of the oil supplies to South Africa—which has virtually no oil reserves—led by Mobil and Caltex. The U.S. has helped provide technology for South Africa's oil-to-coal project, SASOL, and has helped establish South Africa as a nuclear power, providing reactors, fuel and training.

Over 60 U.S. banks, headed by Citicorp, make loans to South Africa. And American corporations and the U.S. government sell it modern military equipment. (The ostensible Carter arms embargo was lifted by the Reagan administration.)

Arguments in favor of American investment generally claim that foreign business will help improve conditions for the blacks there. But economic support of South Africa equals support of apartheid. Even for the tiny number of blacks who actually are employed by American firms, working conditions do not, and by law cannot, differ significantly from the practices of South African firms. Even if foreign companies followed the Sullivan Principles—set of guidelines that recommended reforms like integrating restrooms—they still help maintain the South African state. In South Africa it is a crime punishable by death to call for foreign corporate withdrawal.

Jennie Traschen  
Chicago

## Intervention

TAKE EXCEPTION TO THE REASONING IN your editorial "Time to let go and let the Third World be" (ITT, May 8).

My disagreement is with your statement: "As long as another country does not represent an unambiguous threat to our security...our government has no business trying to overthrow its government." This notion may appeal to American isola-

tionist tendencies, but it is at odds with democratic socialism.

You argue that we should let foreign governments "go their own way unhindered" because "that's what self-determination is all about." If by "self-determination" you mean democratic self-rule, then I agree that is what our foreign policy should advocate. But it should be plain that where a government is undemocratic, "self-determination" for the government does not mean self-determination for the people. "Self-determination" for the white minority South African government, for example, does not mean self-determination for the disenfranchised majority. And though South Africa may not pose an "unambiguous threat to our security," our government should nonetheless actively work to overthrow South Africa's government.

This is not an argument for military intervention the world over. First, there may be alternative means (such as economic sanctions) available to make a government more democratic. Second, a country may be democratic enough to allow for progressive change within the political process. And finally, military intervention may cause such instability that the costs outweigh the benefits.

Democracy in Nicaragua, for example, would be best advanced by our country's aid and support, rather than our ceaseless hostility, which will, if anything, tend to push Nicaragua away from democracy. Our approach to Nicaragua should be one of support in large part precisely because the government there is already democratic enough to allow for further progress within the current political system.

Andrew Dwyer  
Washington, D.C.

**Editor's reply:** This is a good example of the way in which some on the left share with many on the right the idea that as Americans we have the right to determine for all people of the world what's good for them. We do not believe that. It is one thing to stop aiding South Africa, or investing there. We believe that is necessary—and also that if we did the people of South Africa would have a much better chance of overthrowing the present regime. It is quite another thing for the U.S. to instigate revolution in South Africa or anywhere else. If we claim that right for ourselves how can we deny it to others? Should every nation that thinks it knows what's best for the world go around trying to overthrow governments that don't meet its standards?

## Not true

PRESENT DONALD LAZARE'S SNIDE COMMENT (ITT, "Paying homage to a missing link," April 10), that David Riesman and I are "Cold War liberal pluralists" who believe that "American media, business and politicians only give the masses what they want" with respect to popular culture.

David Riesman began to argue against the Cold War shortly after it began, and has argued against it ever since—for four decades now. On popular culture I will speak only for myself, but I do not use

# LETTERS

*In These Times* is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

the term masses and have never said that they should be given what they want, although I have written, in *Popular Culture and High Culture*, that in a democracy, all citizens deserve to be given what they think is good, rather than what critics, of the right or left, think is good for them.

Herbert J. Gans  
New York

## Mayor Tom

YOUR EDITORIAL MASTHEAD CARRIES the motto "The Independent Socialist Newspaper." Yet your piece on Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley (ITT, May 8) manages to avoid every serious Los Angeles issue while confining itself to the same male-beauty contest style that surrounded Reagan's campaign last year. What has this got to do with independence, let alone socialism?

While occasionally paying lip-service to decency, Mayor Tom invariably lines up with the city's rich and powerful where hard money is involved.

There are reportedly 40,000 to 50,000 homeless men and women living on the streets of Los Angeles. The city's response was to open a "huge" 125-man shelter last winter; the shelter will be torn down next month. Recently, L.A. police chased homeless people out of a "junctetown" they put together because the city said the shacks were "unsafe." Will the homeless now be "safe" living on the city streets? Where is our lovely Mayor Tom?

One place that saw Mayor Tom a couple of weeks ago was Washington to lobby for the mis-named Wilshire rapid-transit Metrorail subway here, costing some \$3 billion. With six stations spaced one-half mile apart restricting average train speeds to some 20-odd miles per hour, the system is not possibly "rapid-transit." Luxury condos, unneeded hotels and office buildings are planned at every station: the project is primarily a real-estate promotion to enrich downtown landlords with the public's tax-money. One \$30 million station will destroy the low-income community on Alvarado Street; three stations on Fairfax Avenue will wreck the poor, elderly Jews living there. Mayor Tom has never said one word on these questions.

Samuel Schiffer  
Los Angeles

## Absurd

DISAGREE STRONGLY WITH R.B. DU BOFF'S insistence (ITT, Letters, March 27) that

National Public Radio is "skewed to the right." It appears from his letters that he has listened only sporadically, heard conservative commentators those few times and concluded that all of NPR's broadcasting is similar to the little bit he heard.

My schedule almost always permits me to listen to *Morning Edition* on weekdays and *All Things Considered* seven days a week. In thousands of hours of listening I have not noticed any pronounced right-wing bias. I haven't kept a scorecard, but it seems to me that commentators are about evenly balanced between left and right.

In addition, the public station I listen to, WKAR in East Lansing, Mich., produces many excellent local programs that would be sorely missed if everyone took Du Boff's advice to stop contributing to public radio.

And since Ronald Reagan himself doesn't like public broadcasting either, as most recently reported in *In These Times*' Media Beat, May 1, it seems absurd for those on the left to complain that NPR is rightist.

Neila Tillman  
Lansing, Mich.

## Lay off!

WHILE I TOO FIND MOST FOLK MUSIC REPUGNANT, dull and chock full of false nostalgia, I can't tolerate John Storm Roberts' unprincipled attack of National Public Radio's folk show *A Prairie Home Companion*.

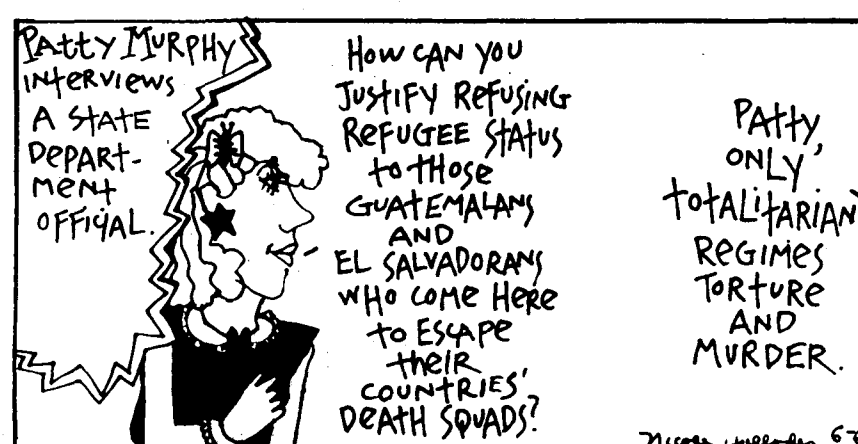
The bulk of this country is what Roberts would like to classify as the "white bourgeoisie." To get Americans to listen to Garrison Keillor instead of Paul Harvey in itself takes a significant bite out of the ruling class' cultural hegemony. PHC offers a weekly antidote to the cynicism of the Reagan era. And it does so in language that a big chunk of America can relate to.

Suggesting that social change can't come about until NPR listeners tune in instead to Kurtis Blow reflects yet again the Third World-centric lack of an understanding of culture that plagues our left. How much longer do we have to endure the same tired images of Third World national liberation struggles as the chosen symbols for our own home-made social change?

Revival folk music may be insipid, but if it rallies a certain class of people to a left perspective, then it's a lot better than any "New Song Movement," radical rap, or Brixton punk. What's more, Garrison Keillor is a bloody genius, so lay off.

Peter Miller  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

## SYLVIA



## by Nicole Hollander





# PERSPECTIVES

## Divestiture is needed now

By Barbara Schuler

**R**ATTLED BY RISING VOICES of protest, boards of trustees and administrators at a growing number of universities are attempting to buy off anti-apartheid demonstrators with offers of partial or "selective" divestment. They talk of setting up investigative committees and instituting guidelines by which to assess the behavior of corporations operating in South Africa.

In 1977, during the last wave of pro-divestment actions, demonstrators may have believed such partial measures could result in pressure on the South African government to begin dismantling the apartheid system. Pro-divestment partisans may have put faith in the newly-authored Sullivan Principles or held out hope, despite evidence here at home, that corporations actually could be a force for progressive social change in South Africa.

But eight years later most of those involved in the divestment movement know better. With emotions ranging from disillusionment with nearly a decade of lukewarm commitment to outrage over continued investment in companies known to be equipping the South African military, students, faculty and staff have joined the fight for full divestment of all university funds in banks and corporations doing business in South Africa. They are being told that such a move would constitute an abdication of fiduciary responsibility that could result in law suits against the trustees: transaction fees would be more than the university could bear, returns would drop considerably and risks would shoot up as the number of smaller companies in the portfolio increased.

Yet none of these claims has been proven. In fact, some argue that trustees would be hit with even harsher lawsuits for refusing to heed warnings of impending large-scale losses by foreign companies in the event of violent revolution, which many observers of South Africa insist is only a matter of time.

And others, including John Harrington, president of San Francisco-based Working Assets Money Fund, say South Africa-free portfolios are more lucrative. At a mid-April public hearing with the University of California Board of Regents, he cited research done by the Boston Co., a Shearson-Lehman-American Express subsidiary. That firm's study found that the annual return on companies in the Standard & Poors 500 without assets in South Africa topped returns of those doing business there by an average 17.4 percent.

He also pointed out that in 1983 another socially responsible investment fund, the Calvert Fund, was the highest yielding money market fund in the country.

Stanford University President Donald Kennedy continually reminds divestment advocates that Stanford has a divestment policy. This policy of "selective divestment" involves a case-by-case review of individual corporations and recommended divestiture from those whose activities can be proven socially injurious. And yet, since the policy's adoption in December of 1977, the university has not divested from a single company. In fact, "substantial social injury" has not yet been defined, nor have requirements and prohibitions been set up to guide the policy. All decisions are made on an ad hoc basis.

According to this process, the Board of Trustees voted on February 12 for conditional divestment of its 124,000 shares in Motorola Corporation, if that company resumes sales—suspended in 1984—to the South African military or police. In January, with a decision still pending on the Motorola case, the trustees voted to purchase more than \$1.5 million worth of

stock in Hitachi, a firm currently equipping the same police forces.

Many who support the idea of constructive engagement point to the more than 100 signatories of the Sullivan Principles—the six-item pledge to improve conditions for black workers—as evidence of the positive role American companies can play in South Africa. But the facts belie these claims.

The Sullivan Principles, with their limited focus on workplace conditions and increased opportunity for job advancement, are at best inadequate—a cold drop of water on a hot stone, as one protester here put it. Affecting only 23,000 workers, or less than 1 percent of the total black South African labor force, they do little to counter the devastating effects of American corporate presence on the lives of the rest of South Africa's 22 million blacks.

Although some contend that the principles function as a public relations ploy designed to protect American corporate interests, many divestment supporters admit that the Sullivan Principles are better than nothing. Yet, despite the minimal requirements for Sullivan compliance, fewer than half the American companies involved in South Africa have signed the voluntary code, and while university presidents tell angry demonstrators that they too abhor apartheid, their schools continue to invest in companies that don't sign.

As in South Africa, where many contend the chance for a "reformed" white

minority government is over, the time for U.S. institutions to implement such piecemeal reform as selective divestment may also have passed.

Divestment backers assert that the mere presence of U.S. corporations in South Africa provides psychological support for the apartheid regime. The South African Congress of Trade Unions has stated that "foreign investment is a pillar of the whole system, which maintains the virtual slavery of the black workers in South Africa."

University arguments against divestment frequently include the assertion that selling off the small percentage of stock they own in any one company will not make a difference in South Africa. But this underestimates the delegitimizing and destabilizing effect on the South African government that successive divestment decisions by numerous major American universities would have.

Donald Kennedy has said that "the corporation whose behavior is at issue suffers nothing more than a brief, well-buried news account." The movement's ultimate aim is not to besmirch the reputation of corporations in South Africa, but rather to get their operations—typically less than 1 percent of the company's total business—out of that country. And as one of the UC regents recently said, "Companies don't want Stanford, Harvard and the University of California saying they don't manage properly." These corporations cannot easily ignore the message university divestments send.

## Challenge facing students

*Sterling Stuckey is a professor of history at Northwestern University who was active in the civil rights movement of the '60s. The following is a statement he has been reading at student demonstrations against apartheid that have been held at the university over the past weeks.*

By Sterling Stuckey

**S**TUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS that are now building and threatening to sweep the campuses of the nation are part of the historical current that was set in motion by the Southern civil rights movement more than two decades ago. A powerful catalyst in the development of the Northern student movement that grew in strength at Berkeley in '64 and crested at Columbia in '68, the student movement in the South was part of a larger awakening of students—in Turkey, in South Korea, in Japan, in France. Student activism today is rooted in and to some extent draws inspiration from the student movement of the '60s, especially in the U.S.

The concerns of student activists at Berkeley, Columbia, Cornell, UCLA, Col-

orado, Northwestern and elsewhere are largely those of their predecessors. SDS's Port Huron statement is, in its central thrust, as valid today as it was 23 years ago. Concerning the generation of college students of the period, the statement reads:

*Our comfort was penetrated by events too troubling to dismiss. First, the permeating and victimizing fact of human degradation, symbolized by the Southern struggle against racial bigotry, compelled most of us from silence to activity. Second, the enclosing fact of the Cold War, symbolized by the presence of the bomb, brought awareness that we ourselves, and our friends, and millions of abstract "others" ... might die at any time. We might deliberately ignore, or avoid, or fail to feel all other human problems, but not these two, for these were too immediate and crushing in their impact, too challenging in the demand that we as individuals take the responsibility for encounter and resolution.*

The issue of the bomb and that of racism are mainly responsible, together with the possibility of raw, unrestrained imperialism in Nicaragua, for our being here today. The challenge before us takes on ever more grisly form: the current administration seeks to extend the arms race into outer space—in the name of peace; to reconcile itself with Nazism—in the name of anti-Communism; to offer aid to fascists opposing the Nicaraguan people—in the name of humanitarianism; to support the fascist South African regime—in the name of constructive engagement.

Even George Orwell, that master student of perversions of language and of the human spirit, could not have imagined an American head of state laying a wreath in a cemetery containing 49 Waffen SS. But Reagan not only imagined it, but was determined to do the deed, which helps explain, as little else could, his support of the murderers of South African blacks and his refusal to effect sanctions against that regime—a regime that is the clearest embodiment of the spirit of Nazism on the face of the earth today.

American corporations invest in South Africa today for the same reason they have invested for generations. They oppose divestiture on the grounds that they have made wise investments. What they mean is that it is highly profitable to have such

forms of intense exploitation of black labor. Apart from surrendering all democratic values, those who invest there are taking a dangerous, calculated risk, for what the architects of American foreign policy fear is not race war in South Africa but a revolution that would place the levers of economic control in the hands of the black majority.

Americans must respond to the events of the hour. For unless there is a change in the foreign policy of Ronald Reagan, there will be no sheltered rear for anyone. Progressive, democratic forces must gain the ascendancy and assert their collective will. But the changes sought cannot come through traditional structures manipulated by traditional politicians, the business-as-usual crowd. New alliances must be formed and new responsibilities shouldered if the challenge is to be met.

The victory cannot be won by students yet cannot be won without them. The dilemma of the '60s remains before us: Northern students acted then without support from the labor movement, which was all but moribund. Today, as students again confront injustices, the labor movement, despite staggering unemployment and a precipitous decline in the quality of American life, seems weaker than ever. But there are some signs of hope: the generation gap that coursed the landscape of the nation like a geological fault has been largely closed; and in some sense we are all products of the '60s, yet are responsible for the present moment in time.

What will be the role of labor in the struggle a'borning? Of the civil rights movement? Of women? Of the Jewish people? (Will blacks and Jews mend the fence between them as the specter of Nazism rises on the horizon?) Students are in the process this very moment of defining their role, which for the moment is the vanguard role. Will these groups act separately or together as one? Which elements within the movement will provide the critique of the nation's condition that best points the way to a more just and human society and, consequently, a genuine peace.

The answers will be revealed in time. What is certain now is that, increasingly, we are living near the rapids of history and, on occasion, can hear the deafening sound. I believe that many here today, especially the students, will meet the challenge, "will take the responsibility for encounter and resolution."

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## PERSPECTIVES



The recent murder of U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency agent Juan Camarena is only one well publicized aspect of the crisis.

## Mexico in trouble, inside and out

By Bob Gottlieb & Peter Wiley

**T**HINGS LOOK VERY BAD for Mexico for the next five years," said the young Mexico City businessman over lunch. There are greater tensions between Mexico and the U.S. than at any other time in recent memory, his father explained.

Mexico, indeed, is facing its gravest crisis since the outbreak of political unrest in the late '60s. But since this crisis is converging on Mexico from several directions, the threat to its stability is more fundamental. And this instability can only undermine relations between the U.S. and Mexico, the country with which the U.S. is most inextricably intertwined.

The murder of U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency employee Juan Camarena and his Mexican pilot, Alfredo Zavala, by Mexican drug dealers is only part of the most publicized aspect of the crisis.

Subsequent arrests and revelations indicate that Mexico's infamous *narcotraficantes* are working closely with business, police, and government figures at the highest level of society. These developments have added to the instability caused by the collapse of Mexico's oil boom, its gargantuan foreign debt, its attempts to maintain an independent foreign policy in Central America and threats to the ruling *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) from the conservative *Partido Accion Nacional*.

Since World War II, the PRI has made Mexico the most stable country in Latin America. It has functioned both as the ruling political party and a system of government pulling together potentially divergent sectors of society, such as labor and peasant organizations, into a vast network of control. Those groups that insist on their independence, such as the highly factionalized and debilitated Mexican left, are nevertheless still dependent on the PRI government. The PRI helps finance their publications, hires their bright young stars, patronizes their leading spokesmen and indulges in the same "revolutionary" rhetoric.

Those who refuse to play by these rules, such as independent peasant organizers, trade union dissidents and prominent newspaper columnist Manuel Buendia, are either murdered or simply disappear.

Systematic corruption is the price that the Mexican people pay for this system.

Former presidents have looted the country shamelessly, setting an example that is followed by government officials from the cop on the beat on up.

### Oil respite.

The inevitable tensions built into such a system were deferred by the economic boom of the '70s, when huge oil discoveries lifted Mexico into the ranks of the largest oil and gas producers in the world. The cruel impoverishment of the countryside, conditions in the sprawling shantytowns that surround Mexico City, dwindling water supplies, the darkening smog clouds that descend daily on the capital and other major cities were all forgotten during the heady days of the boom. Mexico was developing a prosperous middle class, and there appeared to be a way out of the cycle of poverty in which much of the country was trapped.

Then, starting in 1982, came the crash. The price of oil dropped precipitously followed by employment. To pay its debts and obtain emergency funding from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the government has been forced to cut back on social services, and the private sector has abandoned numerous major projects.

But the affluent have suffered little, although one businessman explained that he no longer visits Las Vegas because he gambles with his future every day.

The poor, on the other hand, have long been conditioned to a hand-to-mouth existence. And those who were just moving into the middle class find themselves faced once again with a limited future.

In protest, many Mexicans, particularly in areas of the north that are under greater U.S. influence, have turned to the *Partido Accion Nacional* (PAN) to voice dissatisfaction with the system. Traditionally a small party of conservative Catholics and businessmen, PAN has attracted many supporters among the urban middle class and has become the major opposition party. It is also openly backed by some of the most powerful northern businessmen, who, despite their dependency on government subsidies, turned against the PRI in the wake of the nationalization of the banks in 1982. PAN is widely perceived as a stalking horse for elements in Mexican society, such as the military and some of the leading business families, who are not committed to a democratic solution to Mexico's problems.

Starting soon after the 1982 crisis, PAN won a string of electoral victories in north-

ern towns and cities leading the PRI to steal a number of elections, notably in the border towns of Tijuana, Mexicali and Piedras Negras. Rioting broke out earlier this year in Piedras Negras as a result of the vote-stealing controversy.

A showdown between PRI and PAN is coming in July when midterm elections for the House of Deputies take place. PAN should benefit from the recent drug scan-

dal since a number of high level police officials have been arrested, and there are charges that the governors of at least two northern states, PRI members, are also involved.

### The system in crisis.

The recent crisis has led Mexican writers on the right and the left to discuss "the collapse of the Mexican system." Mexico, these writers argue, is faced with two choices: an even more authoritarian government, perhaps with the active involvement of the military, or a real moral renovation that would cleanse the system from top to bottom. Then, too, the remarkable PRI system may just muddle through as it has for more than 50 years.

Whatever the outcome, Americans are faced with a period of turmoil on its southern border. This turmoil results not from the toppling of another domino by mythical Soviet-Cuban proxies, but from both the internal dynamics of the Mexican system and its relations with the U.S.

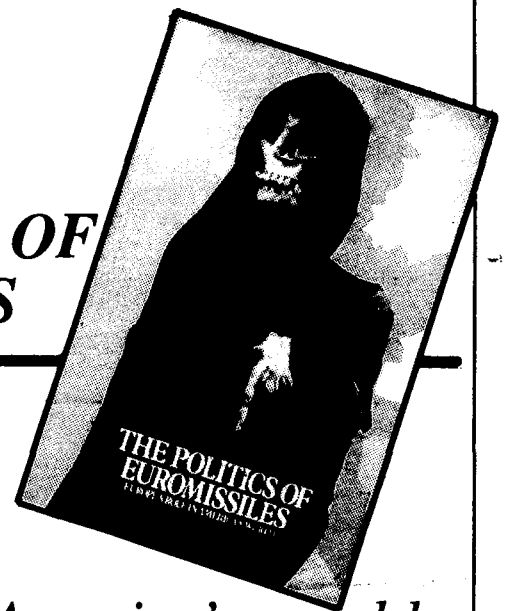
There are clear signs that the Reagan administration has decided to take advantage of the present situation to press its own demands in Mexico. The administration seeks to assure that the Mexican government pays its debts, curtails drug trafficking and aligns itself with the U.S. in Central America. Further, meetings between PAN leaders and U.S. Ambassador John Gavin and support from prominent Republicans have led to fears that PAN is acting as an American surrogate in Mexico.

In the long run, such pressure can only add to the turmoil and contribute to the revival of the type of radical nationalism that was one of the basic themes of the Mexican Revolution.

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IN THESE TIMES' EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT DIANA JOHNSTONE'S NEW BOOK...

## THE POLITICS OF EUROMISSILES



## Europe's role in America's world

In this lively and polemical book, *In These Times'* Diana Johnstone argues that U.S. strategy is designed to exploit international rivalries within Europe, reasserting its own military and political dominance through rearmament and an aggressive anti-communist crusade.

Johnstone carefully weighs the significance of the German Question in European politics and assesses the differences between the French and German lefts.

Johnstone provides a lucid portrait of a Europe still dominated and limited by past rivalries, unable to transcend the petty grandeur of its nation states even in the face of unprecedented threats to peace.

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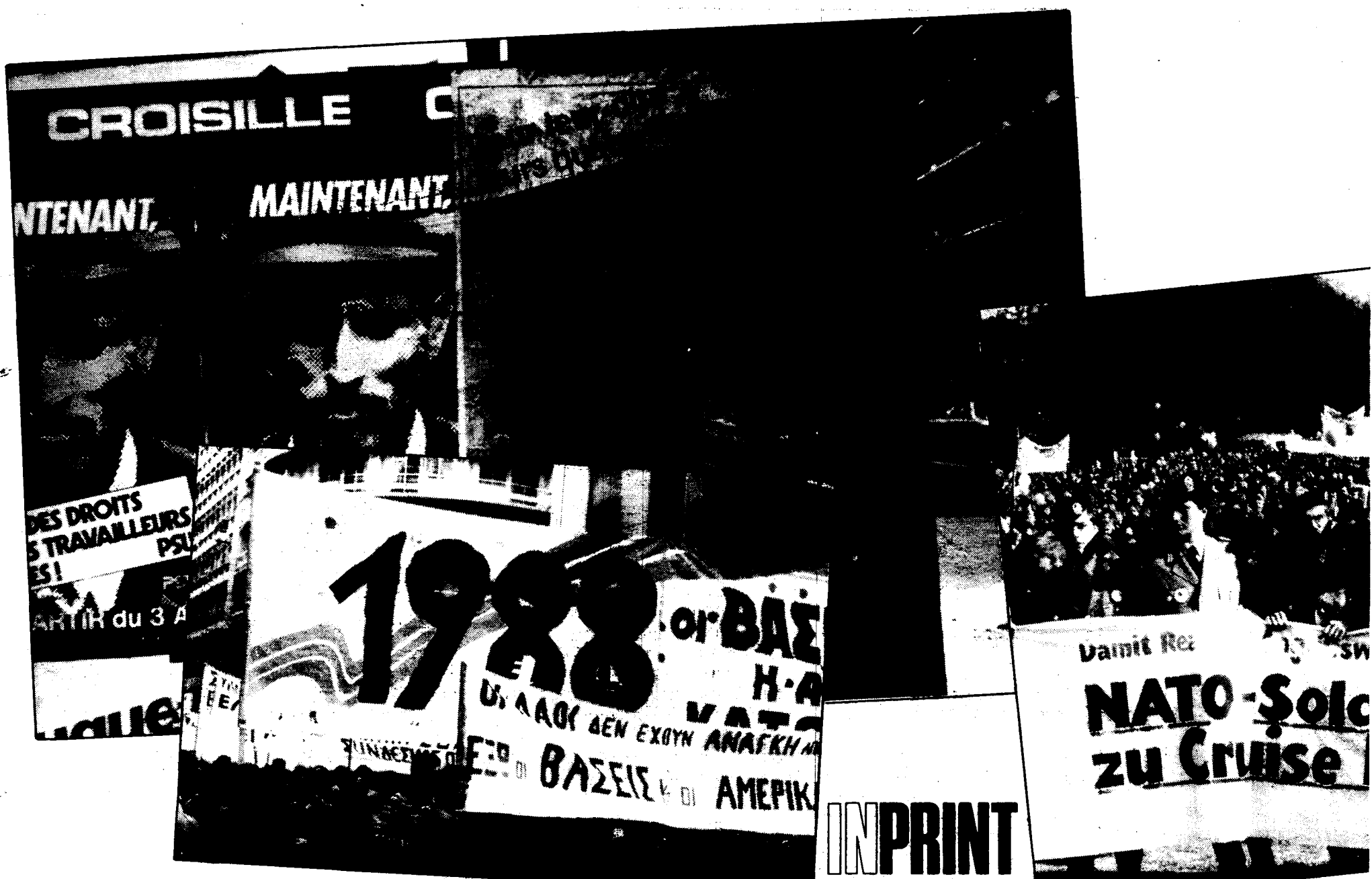
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# The Politics of Euromissiles

By Diana Johnstone

Schocken Books/Verso, 218 pp., \$6.95

By Alexander Cockburn

THERE ARE FEW TOPICS AS bloated with mystifying doubletalk as the relationship between the U.S. and Western Europe. The ideology of the NATO alliance has been so fiercely branded on the public backside over the past generation that one can almost forgive President Reagan for his pro-fascism exhibition at Bitburg.

Since de-Nazification in the U.S. and British zones of occupied Germany had effectively stopped by 1946 and if U.S. Army counter-intelligence was employing SS men in that year and shipping SS mass murderers by the boatload to the U.S. and to Latin America by 1948, it was an error of taste and timing on Reagan's part rather than any substantive misunderstanding of NATO politics that caused him to honor an SS man's grave in 1985.

It was, after all, Reagan who said a few months ago that most Americans believed that the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War had fought on the wrong side and it surely won't be long before an American president goes to an SS reunion to make amends for failing to realize that Himmler's legions had made no mistake about the real enemy to the east.

One of the central tasks of Western "official" journalism has been the production of false consciousness about the NATO alliance. Right after the war James Reston and Walter Lippmann drafted the speech in which Sen. Arthur H. Vandenberg abandoned isolationism in favor of the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine. Then the next day in the *New York Times* Reston praised Vandenberg for his

"statesmanlike" change of heart. In subsequent decades Reston has continued to act as the high priest of "Natolatry," as cohort after cohort of the best and the brightest have been posted to the European news bureaus in Paris, London, Bonn, Brussels and Rome and sent back the requisite magnums of agitprop about the Holly Alliance: utterly mad scenarios à la Drew Middleton of the *New York Times* about a "feared Soviet breakthrough in the Central NATO Theater"; fears of "appeasement" by the left of the British Labour Party; the eternal menace of the "historic compromise" in Italy; the specter of German revanchism; the plague of Euro-pacifism, etc., etc. A few years of reading this sort of tripe and I begin to think I'm caught forever in a "NATO-land" pavilion at Disney World, with audio-animatronic dolls chirping about the Marshall Plan and the menace of SS-20 deployment.

The great provider of Natolatry has been the *New York Times*, starting with Reston and ending in the last decade with the coarse propaganda for the Reagan right of Richard Burt, subsequently the State Department's senior official for European affairs and now ambassador to Bonn; and after Burt, John Vinocur, who has been the *New York Times'* Bonn and Paris bureau chief before returning to New York as, conceivably, the foreign editor designate of the *New York Times*.

It's hard to overestimate the importance of the *New York Times* and specifically of Burt and Vinocur in the assertion of NATO and, more shrilly, of Reaganite ideology against the European peace movements. Burt handled the initial misrepresentations about SS-20 deployment and Vinocur followed through with carefully judged slanders about the various disarmament campaigns. His classic, dreamed up with the

once and future Maoist Andre Glucksmann, was the charge that the roots of the German peace movement could be found in anti-Semitism.

## The one recourse.

This is not inconsequential corridor gossip about a couple of bad journalists. Since 1977 these two—assisted on occasion by such other *Times*-people as the venerable Drew Middleton and the slightly more decorous Leslie Gelb (who was in the State Department in 1978 pondering how to use the CIA to combat the anti-neutron bomb campaign) defined the major issues in the NATO alliance for the American elite, from the punk-wallahs at the Council for Foreign Relations to Congress, to the administration, to the producers of the network news shows. No other "official" medium has equivalent weight.

It is absolutely and horrifyingly true that anyone wishing to obtain a coherent, adequately reported alternative account of what was happening in Western Europe and in the politics of the NATO alliance has had essentially one recourse: namely the reporting of Diana Johnstone in *In These Times*.

I say "absolutely true" because no other European correspondent reporting to an American audience has even approached Johnstone's coverage, not merely of the NATO/Euromissile affair, but of significant political developments across the continent. There are left

journalists who are strong on theory, but who sometimes think the only useful legwork is the exercise involved in getting to the local library, and there are left journalists who are competent with notebook or tape-recorder but deficient in analytic capacity. Johnstone can report and think at the same time, to the vast benefit of the readers of *In These Times*. I say "horrifyingly true," because it is a dismaying commentary on the shrivelled state of the political culture that Johnstone's work is as unique as it is.

Her new book *The Politics of Euromissiles* covers the great crisis within NATO that in its most conspicuous phase extended from 1977 until 1983 and whose reverberations continue to this day. The crisis saw the largest mass demonstrations in the history of Europe, the explosive growth of peace movements—reborn after 15 years of dormancy—in West Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and the United Kingdom. It saw the 572 nuclear missiles—108 Pershing II's and 464 Tomahawk ground-launched missiles—become the defining symbols of Reaganite (late Carterism herein included) America's relationship to Western Europe and to the Soviet Union.

And of course in its resolution the crisis saw a major defeat for the peace movement and for the left: in West Germany, Christian Democracy restored beneath the aegis of Helmut Kohl; in the U.K.,

a huge re-election victory for Margaret Thatcher; in France and Italy, virulent strains of Social Democracy spearheaded by Francois Mitterrand and Bettino Craxi; the spirit of detente and, indeed, of North-South constructive engagement sustained mostly in colloquies or commissions sponsored by the older statesmen of the Socialist International (Olaf Palme, Willy Brandt and Bruno Kreisky). This side of the Atlantic, too, the disarmament movement toppled rapidly from its prime-time potency in mid-1982. By early 1985, to take one instance, Randall Forsberg was unleashing a mass mailing announcing that the big omission in 1984 had been the failure to convince "the experts." Forsberg sees this as the next big task. See you at the symposium, Edward Teller.

## What is the crisis?

What was the Euromissile crisis fundamentally about? Johnstone does an admirable job in tracing its history, year by year and country by country. As a matter of widely accepted platitude, the crisis is supposed to have commenced with former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's speech at the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London on Oct. 28, 1977, calling for fresh intermediate missile deployment by NATO to counter the sudden "threat" of the SS-20s. As Johnstone shows, Schmidt never called for new missiles and in fact was

## WESTERN EUROPE

# Blasting the myths about politics of Euromissiles





Photographs: Diana Johnstone

arguing that while the SALT II treaty signed by former President Jimmy Carter, Leonid Brezhnev (though never approved by the U.S. Senate) had codified the strategic balance, it was therefore all the more necessary to negotiate a similar treaty on nonconventional and tactical weapons in the European theater.

The factors that lend to the "two-track" NATO decision on long-range theater nuclear forces announced in Brussels on Dec. 12, 1979, were, as my old history master used to say about the reason for Rome's decline, many and varied. Johnstone cites, among U.S. motivations for pushing deployment, "burden sharing" by the Common Market countries, deployment on West German soil of nuclear weapons capable of hitting the Soviet Union, an overall demonstration of NATO "resolve."

The one thing Pershing II and cruise missile deployment very definitely was *not* was a response to a sudden threat by SS-20s. As any halfway rational member of the U.S. arms control community will

tell you, SS-20s were—until they became a Soviet testing of NATO "will"—a simple modernization of the SS-4s and SS-5s. They didn't alter the balance of anything, as the Russians tried plaintively to explain when they were confronted with the "zero option" dreamed up by Richard Perle and hailed as an imaginative arms control effort by the *New York Times* and almost every other quasi-official organ.

Johnstone seems to me to be on somewhat more uncertain ground when she discusses the procurement-cum-military rationales for the Euromissiles. It's certainly true that Martin Marietta was casting around for a role for its Pershing II missile back in the very early '70s, long before the SS-20 was even a gleam in Richard Burt's eye. It's also true that by the mid-'70s, as the military-industrial-intellectual revolt against detente grew, the cruise was seen as a nifty implement with which to bludgeon the arms control crowd.

But Johnstone goes on to argue that Pershing II and cruise deploy-

ment was a deliberate move by the U.S. Reaganauts toward a "decapitation" strategy, whereby a NATO strike with the Euromissiles and much else besides would wipe out the Soviet elite, presumably before any of its members had time to get on the phone to the siloes to tell Ivan to push every button in sight.

This kind of speculation comes from reading too much Colin Gray and Daniel Pipes in the long winter evenings. Contributors to *Commentary* don't get automatic access to the targeting computers of the Joint Strategic Planning Staff, much though they would like to pretend to the contrary. The institution most thrilled by the Pershing II and most dedicated to its deployment was the U.S. Army, which had previously chafed under the 400-mile limitation imposed in 1958 on any of its missiles. It probably saw the whole Euromissile affair as an immense victory over the enemy, by which it means the U.S. Air Force and

Navy. As far as is known, the Joint Strategic Planning Staff, dominated by the Air Force and Navy, has not integrated the Pershing IIs into its targeting strategy.

#### French intellectuals.

If Johnstone seems a trifle oppressed, even stilted, in her description of the German peace movement and of the struggles within the SPD, the mood lifts when she turns her attention to France and Italy. No one has ever caught better the matchless self-importance, vanity, overweening nationalism and majestic ignorance of the French intellectuals in their present phase. Page after page of Johnstone's book evokes the stench of what a colleague of mine at the *New Left Review* once called "perverted Jacobin messianism...a curdled Maoist hostility to the Soviet Union and a post-leftist indulgence to U.S. imperialism." This is enough name-calling for one paragraph, but I defy anyone to read the sentiments of Jean Chevenement, Andre Glucksmann and Mitterrand himself without reaching for the thesaurus.

Johnstone is excellent at evoking the multi-tiered realities of the NATO relationship and the way in which ideology is translated into political action: those endless seminars of the conservative Atlantic intellectuals; the delusive contortions of social democrats persuading themselves that arms escalation is somehow the road to arms limitation. The larger ebbs and flows of the *zeitgeist* that from time to time she catches brilliantly is in her chapter on Italy and the cult of terrorism, when she talks of the social system that "has been squeezing out the culture of productive work (the culture of industrial society, both bourgeois and working-class) with a new culture of security. As this fills the social space, its inner conflicts (cops and

robbers, commandoes and terrorists) absorb the attention of the media and mold the imaginations of the impressionable."

Objectively, as they used to say, the European peace movements had to stagger forward under impossible burdens: the unresolved and at present unresolvable "German question"; the "Finlandization" of Western Europe economies by the U.S. and consequent absurd voluntarism of any talks of, in Chevenement's words, "a rupture with capitalism." And the fact that a "decoupling" from the U.S. (unthinkable to the U.S., given its dominance in NATO weapons procurement) would lead in present political conditions to that "Gaulist Atlanticism" so devoutly desired by Reagan's New Right strategists, in which a Europe of the right would, side by side with the United States, aim its own vastly enlarged arsenal toward the East. It would at last, to use Kissinger-speak, be shouldering "its responsibilities."

In the end, the Euromissile crisis was about an assertion of U.S. power, a warning whistle to Euro-socialists in France, Italy (and by extension Spain and Portugal) that there were serious limits on their room to maneuver; a warning to West Germany that it cannot, bottom line, get ideas above its occupied status; a reminder to Western Europe that in a contest between socialism and barbarism, Washington will happily opt for the latter.

Johnstone has told the whole sad saga well. A bigger book would possibly have had more about the crisis from the point of view of media manipulation of consciousness, but since she is such a lonely counter to such manipulation, this tiny cavil should not detract from my admiration for her work, both in weekly form and between hard covers.

Alexander Cockburn writes a bi-weekly column for *The Nation*.

*"Anyone wishing to obtain a coherent, adequately reported alternative account of what was happening in Western Europe and in the politics of its NATO alliance has had essentially one recourse: namely, the reporting of Diana Johnstone in In These Times."*



## ART «» ENTERTAINMENT



Photo courtesy ACA Galleries, N.Y.

"Earth Birth," quilted by Jacquelyn Moore, from Judy Chicago's *THE BIRTH PROJECT*

## ART

## Long labor for the Birth Project

By Lucy R. Lippard

**L**ABOR WAS PROLONGED and sometimes painful. The child is healthy (it's a girl). Midwives and mothers will never be the same again. After five years, more than 100 women and a few men have worked thousands of hours to produce some 100 large-scale needleworks of art that make up Judy Chicago's *Birth Project*.

No one will ever see the whole project in one place. Unlike *The Dinner Party*—Chicago's first long-term project, which was intended as a museum piece, a permanent feminist monument—*The Birth Project* has been democratically decentralized since its conception. Broken down into 80 exhibition units of 12 to 45 running feet which can be rented singly or multiply, it includes explanatory texts and photo panels about its own evolution and about the art and history of birth in the world.

The volunteer stitchers who produced *The Birth Project* live in rural, small-town and urban America (and in New Zealand, Alaska, Hawaii and Canada). Individually and in groups, combating isolation by connection, they worked from Chicago's drawn and painted designs. Selected after making multiple "translation samples," the stitchers' input consisted of: (1) execution (no small contribution), (2) ideas and research about how to design and execute the final pattern and (3) collective work and discussion about each piece in an exhausting and exhaustive review that took place several times a year either on the workers' home grounds, at the project headquarters in Benicia, Calif., or through the mails. Every step had to be approved by Chicago and her technical supervisor, Sally Babson.

Most of the stitchers are white, and most are comfortably middle class, though from extremely diverse backgrounds, including a domestic worker, a whole family that runs a needlework shop in Vineland, N.J., a countercultural

artist/farmer, a woman who sheared her own sheep to make her yarn, a child psychologist and a Native American living in a teepee.

Chicago, who is childless, began to be interested in birth in the mid-'70s, when a radical nun helped her write a feminist version of the Book of Genesis. When Chicago discovered the paucity of images of birth in the history of

art (and feminist art), the project fertility was assured. "Art usually flows from art," Chicago says, "but this art is going to have to grow directly from experience." In 1980, she witnessed and sketched a friend's childbirth. She began to collect women's firsthand birth experiences, to research the history and creation myths of other cultures and "the whole issue of myths and their function in cul-

ture." She was fascinated and repelled, and that ambivalence informs her imagery.

The result is a view of birth as a metaphor for creation itself for female production rather than reproduction. It is a subtle riff on the way men have traditionally claimed the creation of culture and left the messier aspects of creation to women. In Chicago's vision, women can birth anything they

want (and men still can't have babies...). The specific needle techniques are also symbols—smocking, for instance, suggests confinement. And the lengthy obsessive processes could represent feminism itself, in the parthenogenetic sense that Everywoman can create herself if freed from social and economic constraints.

## Controversial motherhood.

The guiding image of the mother as a symbol for all that is fertile in women is purely feminist in that it glorifies women, not fetuses, and thereby directly opposes the Right's lifesavers. Nevertheless, any idealization of motherhood is dangerous at a time when the Reagan administration is cheering on abortion clinic bombers and threatening to ban abortions altogether, when thousands of women will bring unwanted babies into the world because some "religious" men get off on "morality" more than they care about women's lives.

Motherhood is a privilege in this affluent country where 25 percent of the children are starving, and there is an inescapable contradiction in the use of maternity as a metaphor for women's potential creative freedom at a time when so many women's freedoms are menaced precisely by that maternity. Could these images be hung in an abortion clinic without making the patients feel guilty about not fulfilling their biological destinies?

Of course Chicago is aware of this controversy. In her designs, in *The Birth Project* book (Doubleday), and in the exhibition panels, she demythologizes her mythologies with graphic descriptions of the pain and violence associated with birth. However, she found that her informants, re-

## MEDIA B E A T

## The Answer to "Is Nothing Sacred?"

Hanna-Barbera, the company that made cartoons on Saturday morning TV a staple by cranking out simply drawn, cheap and incredibly violent series, has now done a savvy survey of TV trends and come up with a new project: Bible stories for the videocassette market. "The Bible stories have violence, deceit, treachery, plagues," President Joseph Barbera told the *New York Times*. Good stuff, the stuff of prime-time even. But Barbera sees the series as responding to a trend toward more "moralistic" family programming (see *In These Times*, May 8). That is the logic that fuels Christian Broadcasting Network's cable "family channel," which has been producing Old and New Testament cartoon stories for kids for years, tailoring them to CBN's evangelical perspectives. This series will be ecumenical, though, with Catholic, Protestant and Jewish advisors, and entertainment will come first. Action stories like David and Goliath, and Samson and Delilah, will be the first ones Hanna-Barbera tackles. Barbera says he sees the series as a kind of cartoon version of Classic Comics, and looks forward to doing, say, *A Tale of Two Cities*—presumably in the wham-bam style preschoolers have become accustomed to.

## Hey, It's Only a Movie

As President Reagan kept tinkering with the script for World War II, the Holocaust and its aftermath on his journey to Bitburg and back, many noted that his grasp on Hollywood seemed better than that on history. But the assumption that the silver screen is a legitimate source of authority for political decision-making seems to be growing. Two weeks ago congressional hearings were held on the plight of the American farmer, and witnesses included Jessica Lange (*Country*), Cissy Spacek (*The River*) and Jane Fonda (*The Dollmaker*). They all offered moving, even tearful testimony, but it wasn't the real-life experience of people like Lange and Spacek—who both live on farms—that gave them their credentials. Even when farm history was mentioned, it harked back to the movies. Fonda, for instance, said the farm crisis has reached a severity "not seen since my father made *Grapes of Wrath*." And the audience loved it. The hearing room was packed, not only with fans, who stood on chairs to see the stars, but with a full set of agricultural task force committee

members. To those who asked whether this was expert testimony or hype, Democratic sponsors answered simply that the farm issue needed publicity. A more pertinent question may be whether there is a difference worth making between surface and substance in the shaping of public issues, and whether anyone could recognize it in a pinch.

## Truth and Consequences

When Czech writer Milan Kundera accepted the Jerusalem Prize for Literature recently, he celebrated the art of the novelist, which "has managed to create the entrancing imaginative realm where no one is the possessor of the truth and where everyone has the right to be understood." Tell it to the U.S. government, that defender of free speech and press against communists and their intellectual fellow travellers everywhere. First there was much hemming and hawing over whether poet Ernesto Cardenal, Nicaragua's minister of culture, would be allowed to attend New York's Latin American Book Fair in early May. Pressure from civil liberties and writers' groups forced reconsideration, and Cardenal got to come. David Ungar, an organizer of the fair, said, "The conference is a celebration of the written word, and in this country we assume there still exists freedom of the written word." Well, except for Farley Mowat, Canadian author of *Never Cry Wolf* and other subversive tracts. He was stopped at the border and denied entry at the outset of a U.S. promotion tour for his new book on endangered seacoast wildlife. He was on a list of people barred for being Communists or anarchists; Mowat cheerfully admitted knowing both types and more, and just as cheerfully denied being any. Then he refused the State Department's offer of "parole" for a non-existent crime. Finally there is the rolling scandal of the 300-book "America through American Eyes" exhibit for the upcoming Moscow International Book Fair. The National Endowment for Democracy, an outfit the Reagan administration dreamed up to "sell democracy" (read, do outright propaganda) around the world and itself rocked by scandal from birth, funded about a third of the exhibit's cost. With books like Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* and Jonathan Kwitney's *Endless Enemies* on the list, NED's Carl Gershman thought the list listed too far to the left. NED board member Henry Kissinger agreed, and denied he was taking personally the fact that his memoirs had been left off the list. The chairman of the publishers' committee in charge of the exhibit, Holt Rinehart and Winston editor John Macrae, is willing to talk about the issue but says the list is in press. His own perspective is one Kundera would grasp without difficulty: "Whenever independent people make a judgment, it's unbalanced."

—Pat Aufderheide



counting their own "ecstatic" experience, often ignored her statements about "the larger political, social and medical implication of what we had learned."

Chicago's goals for *The Birth Project* are multiple: first, to fuse "the essential female experience" with needlework—the essential tradition of women's art. Second, "to share not only my images, but also my art-making process, knowledge and experience with hundreds of women...to watch the needleworkers realize what they were capable of doing and how the techniques they loved could be expanded and transformed into high art." She also wants to, upgrade and expand the patterns available to America's 30 million needleworkers and to encourage fine artists to design them, perhaps on commission. Finally, Chicago wants to prove that "there is a much greater interest in art than most artists realize, if that art can be made to speak clearly about issues relevant to people's real lives."

Chicago wanted to show that you can make "fine art" with "minor art," that you can paint with thread, and she has succeeded. The formal inventiveness, the variety of color and line, the juxtapositions of different materials and textures are truly spectacular, although the flat, faceless female figures are defined by a heavy flowing line that sometimes becomes mechanical and graceless in the translation to laborious needle mediums. The needle pieces are all decorative, but they have little to do with the mainstream Pattern & Decoration movement in which non-European cultures or "minor arts" are tapped for their formal strengths; Chicago goes to these sources for representational symbols.

### Some miscarriages.

*The Birth Project* is a brilliant, unprecedented organizing and administrative achievement, but it wasn't all fun and games for anyone concerned. Labor/management relations were not perfect, and some disaffected would-be mothers will blame the miscarriage on the Mother of It All. Chicago, who habitually works 10 to 12 hours a day, had to come to terms with the fragmentation and lack of concentration that is reality for most women and made some unable to complete even the contracted 10 hours a week. At times she feared the whole thing would founder on these differences of lifestyle, since "consistent rhythm is what produces the beauty of an embroidered surface."

One quarter of the works begun were not completed because of emotional blowups, lack of commitment, or low standards or slow paces that Chicago couldn't tolerate. In almost ironic acknowledgment of this aspect of women's experience, *The Birth Project* includes an unfinished embroidery, the needle still at its stopping point, in honor of a woman who valiantly struggled to continue despite a second pregnancy.

Chicago feels that her "participatory art-making period is coming to a close" after a grueling 15 years. She has already begun a major series of paintings on men ("because everybody paints women—men paint women and women paint women"). *The Birth Project* is out in the cold world (though the administrative chord has yet to be cut) and its message of confidence and potential will reach, she hopes, a million people.

The needle artists speak for themselves: "The piece I worked on came to be synonymous with my personal growth and a formal statement of my refusal to accept the expectations imposed on me" (Candis Duncan Pomykala, DeKalb, Ill.). "By showing us ordinary women working in ordinary homes, recognition is placed in the realm of the possible for other women. Our talents are validated" (Kathy Lenhart, Pittsburgh). "...Now I see 'women's work' as

art in the most real sense...not as an extra, but as a necessary part of living" (Tere Jensen, Cardiff-by-the-Sea, Calif.).

The art criticism of Lucy Lippard, author of, most recently, *Get the Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change*, will appear regularly in *In These Times*. An earlier version of this article appeared in the *Village Voice* where until this week Lippard wrote a column on art and politics.

*Chicago wanted to show that you can make "fine art" with "minor art."*

## FILM



South Africans Percy Mtwa and Mobongeni Ngeni in the film *WOZA ALBERT!*

# Facts of fiction from S. Africa

By Pat Aufderheide

**A**T CALIFORNIA NEWSREEL, distributors of social-issue films and videos, the pace of protest about South Africa is gauged with marketplace measures—in the burgeoning rentals of its South African Media Center offerings. Its newest release, *Woza Albert!*, is notable because the film, out on film and video-cassette, is much more than useful information. It's a superb example of how to do theater on film without making the screen a second-class stage.

*Woza Albert!*, the internationally acclaimed black South African play, was written by and starred Percy Mtwa and Mobongeni Ngeni. In it, they assume the roles of various black South Africans—a vendor, barber, servant, manual laborer, soldier—receiving the news that Christ has arrived in South Africa, where a Calvinist white elite imposes apartheid. Christ's arrival precipitates a crisis, and the government launches a nuclear bomb against

the peacemaker. In the ruins, great South African leaders such as Albert Luthuli, assassinated president of the African National Congress, are resurrected.

The film, only an hour long, is less and more than the play. It takes advantage of the potential of film to travel beyond the proscenium arch, and also to move within it. This experience has none of the canned quality of so much filmed performances; it's sometime travelogue, sometime living sculpture, a sometime *60 Minutes* of the South African soul.

This version too stars Mtwa and Ngeni, and they perform segments from the play with a brilliance that ought to make this an actors' workshop favorite text. But the performance segments are striking as well for their intimacy. The camera zooms and focuses on the performers, who boldly pitch to the camera, their mannerisms honed to screen-size. At times they form tight compositions, blocking their motions to fill a small frame, turning two actors into one expressive figure.

The showmanship of the two

men is both flamboyant and synergistic. It doesn't stop with bedazzlement, but draws you into their improvised world. They're magicians of small space, becoming trains and helicopters as well as the almost sit-com-like characters within them. Sometimes their act is show-stopping—for instance, when one plays both the white boss (the imitations of whites are devastating) and his houseboy, all the while changing costumes.

And the sharp wit of the script works well on the small screen—it's vivid caricature of daily speech within mini-scenarios, humor building from savage ironies and ordinary silliness alike. A scavenger is asked what he hopes for with the advent of Christ. Suffused with delight, he describes the parties he thinks whites will have—with tomatoes, cabbage, hot dogs "and all the nice things white people eat"—which will mean a higher class of garbage for him. As a soldier in a helicopter cruises the sea, looking for Christ walking on the water in order to bomb him, he revels in the historic moment: "I wish I had my camera!" he says.

Producer Barney Simon originally advised the two would-be writers to build their play by first observing daily life in the streets of Soweto. The play's characters and scenes are founded on those observations, and the film takes you back to them, both comparing

them to the actors' rendition and providing background. The documentary footage thus tells us something about the process of making art and, quite simply, shows us a place—South Africa—we usually choose not to imagine, keeping the crude realities of subways, hospitals and streets at bay with talk of "issues."

On stage, we watch a black mini-comedy of a cop and a black citizen being searched for a pass. And we also peruse at length the naked face of one of the actors recalling an incident when he hopped out of a car to buy something at a store and was arrested before he could return to the car, where his pass was inside his jacket. A barber on stage cheerfully intimates his client with shears while philosophizing; the real barber is clipping hair in a field, because his shop has been bulldozed, like many homes cleared as blacks have been forcibly relocated to "homelands." The on-stage characters looking for work are given a cohort and a location for their pain when we see the infamous work hostels, the huts in "homelands" where women and children remain, and the urban streets where the unemployed hustle occasional work.

The most astounding documentary segment is of Sun City, the Las Vegas of South Africa. This gaudy display of flesh and fantasy—slot machine addicts, flouncing semi-nude dancers, poolside loungers—is designed as a steam valve for a repressive and oppressive society. The documentary footage itself boggles the imagination, and makes you more than willing to believe it would outrage Christ himself—as it does.

This interweaving is canny and self-reinforcing. The documentary segments answer questions that the performance segments, out of context, raise; and the performance segments render human and vital the experience of living in scenes like the ones the camera travels to in Soweto. This is not a travelogue of guilt, a litany of victims.

The film ends with two codas, each engrossing and each answering questions you may not have known you had asked. After the actors begin the process of resurrecting black leaders, the screen performs its own little miracle, with a clip of Albert Luthuli lecturing the great western powers—and implicitly the western audience: "It is these big nations," he says with graceful dignity, "that must do big things."

And then, as credits roll, the film travels into the foyer of different theaters, interviewing blacks and whites in South Africa. Some of the blacks are solemn, some angry, some jubilant. None of them surprise you. It's the whites who shock—for their blandness, their smug approval of what they have just seen. One sandy-haired man says, in a tone of simultaneous admission and denial, "It's nice to see what they have to say about things."

Like the play, this film provokes with moments like that—not by railing of righteousness, but by exposing us to exemplary moments in the passion of South Africa today.

*Woza Albert!*, as well as other new releases, *Namibia: Africa's Last Colony* and *Allan Boesak: Choosing for Justice*, and other films about South Africa are available from California Newsreel, 630 Natoma St., San Francisco, CA 94103.



# Europe

Continued from page 7

During a TV panel commenting on the North Rhine Westphalia election returns (an SPD landslide) the night of May 12, Kohl accused Reagan's German critics of "primitive anti-Americanism." Brandt, sitting next to him, pounded his fist on the table, shouting, "That's nonsense, you should be ashamed! You harm our people with these lies!" Furious, Brandt called Geissler Germany's "worst rabble rouser since Goebbels." Geissler's pearls include blaming "pacifists" for "Auschwitz."

In a heated debate in the Bundestag two days later, SPD fraction leader Hans Jochen Vogel accused some Christian Democrats, starting with Geissler, of misusing

Reagan's visit "in the most unscrupulous way" to try to "slander the German Social Democrats" by accusing them of anti-Americanism.

Social Democrats did not need to take lessons from anyone to appreciate the virtues of American society or to understand what they owed to the U.S., Vogel said. But, he added, precisely because of the U.S. tradition of freedom and worldwide responsibility, "we owe that great nation not over-eager obedience and diligent acclamation, but honesty and, where necessary, even disagreement." Thus, he said, Social Democrats expressed their concern over the ever more dangerous arms race, Central America, deficit policy. "We are friends and allies of the American people. But we are not the vassals of the current administration."

Geissler's political strategy is to revive

the Christian Democrats' flagging popularity by leading a pro-American, anti-Soviet crusade. He therefore supports Star Wars for neither military nor technological reasons, but for "moral reasons," to join Reagan's crusade against the "Evil Empire." This stance enables Star Wars critics (and critics of other Reagan policies) to be attacked as anti-American agents of Moscow. But Kohl's government itself seems to be tearing itself apart on these issues.

There is indeed discouragement in Europe at the failure of the huge popular protests to stop missile deployment or slow down the arms race. But it takes more than a presidential speaking tour to persuade Europeans to give up understanding things they can do nothing about in order to do something about things they don't understand—that is, to exchange "Europessimism" for Reagan-style optimism. ■

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## Harvester

Continued from page 13

people to appropriate sources of aid, acting as "salesman for the district" (especially for getting federal contracts). Despite dim prospects, he favors federal legislation to create jobs and finance capital improvements.

In the longer term, he emphasizes reducing the deficit—largely by cutting the military—as a way of lowering interest rates. He is a willing advocate of trade restrictions to protect domestic industries and "prevent unfair trade" or flight of industry overseas.

But the key to revival for his district is a flourishing farm economy. An advocate from his first campaign of a farmer-labor alliance, Evans backs the farm legislation recently introduced by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) as a way of boosting farm income and reducing federal farm program expenditures. For the many smaller farmers in his area who made much of their income from factory work, the farm crisis has wiped out both sources of income and swelled the unemployment rolls.

"If farmers do get back on their feet, their equipment is aging. But if they do better, where are they going to get their equipment from?" he asks. "I think we'll abandon a lot of the skills we have, lose a lot of the people who could be making those machines to other areas." The need exists, but not the money. But even with a farm revival, Quad City workers might not benefit given current shifts overseas.

Although Evans favors an "industrial policy" of government-industry-labor cooperation, he notes that Harvester gave local government no advance notice despite past financial aid. "Partnership between business and government becomes less of a partnership when business decides it wants to pull out, in fact becomes no partnership at all," he said.

The experience of the past few years may make a lasting impression on younger people, much like the Depression did on their parents, according to Evans. Yet Reagan won the district. Then again, so did his stalwart foe Evans.

The problem, Evans argues, is that Mondale, like many national Democrats, does not identify with the issues of workers and the poor nor link their lives to the policies of Washington. He talks to his district of a "president so obsessed with Central America that he has little or no concern with the problems of Central Illinois." Recently he visited a local national guard unit in Honduras. "We think," he quipped, "we've found out where Reagan wants to export our farmers."

"In the last campaign Walter Mondale never even talked about unemployment as an issue. We should never accept 7.3 percent unemployment. As long as you ignore those gut economic issues in the Midwest, you're bound to fail."

"The problem with the national Democratic Party," he continued, "and with many of my colleagues in Congress is that they don't really understand that in many parts of the country a severe economic crisis is going on. They generally come from more affluent backgrounds, which leads them to believe in the veracity of these statistics. We'd better get back in touch with constituencies of the Democratic Party who are suffering. Walter Mondale's failure to take my district is tied in to his failure to understand that blue-collar workers and farmers were facing the worst problems since the great Depression."

"Many Democrats at the federal level, in Congress, the campaign committees and the Democratic National Committee are so out of touch with the reality people go through largely because they're college-educated and have never had to face these problems or know people who have had to face these problems. That leads to a kind of class blindness."

Evans' populist victories, unions' vigorous political efforts, the new farmer-labor alliances, a renewed sense of economic morality in the churches, organizing among the unemployed and the continuing crunch of daily economic hardship may be bringing clearer class vision to the workers and unemployed of cities like Rock Island.

But there are still immense stumbling blocks. The only way to bring about economic growth still appears to be catering to the demands of private corporations. Yet many workers—stepped through years of conflict with an antagonist like International Harvester—still doubt that anything is won by meekly submitting to the demands of an Archie McCardell. Greater controls over corporate decisions or alternative engines of growth—more powerful than combined pools of unemployed benefits to start a temporary workers' agency—offer alternatives. That is especially true if those strategies are combined with general economic policies that reduce interest rates and the overvaluation of the dollar and agricultural policies that control production, raise prices and limit farm concentration.

To the extent that workers overcome their own, much different "class blindness" and born-again confusion, those alternatives may become part of a populist ferment from the rust belt cities to match the budding protest on the nearby farms. ■

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# Meyer

Continued from page 24

"So far, just one," replied Epinger. The bidder, a middle-aged, white-haired man, began filling out a form on the hood of the station wagon. "Sir," said Meyer, "I wish you would not bid on this property. It was taken illegally."

Without looking up from his paper work, the man said, "You don't pay taxes. I do. Don't tell you what to do. Don't you tell me!"

The IRS security men moved closer, but there was no cause for alarm. Meyer's commitment to non-violence is absolute. Epinger conferred with the would-be buyer while Meyer and associates tried to hand out anti-nuclear leaflets to the IRS personnel. As the minutes passed and no more bidders appeared, Epinger seemed to be getting nervous and edgy. At one point he almost got into a shoving match with a woman supporter of Meyer, whom he deemed to be standing too close to the trailer. Karl Meyer remained the soul of composure.

Finally, Epinger produced a document and read from it as the entire little entourage, tax resisters and tax enforcers, formed a semi-circle. "Pursuant to the disposition of property and in accord with..." he droned on before getting to the point. Epinger unfolded a paper handed him by the white-haired man (with several large denomination bills inside). "There is one bid," he

said, "and it is for \$1,020."

"For both the car and trailer?" asked someone.

"Yes," said Epinger, "that is the only bid."

"Shouldn't the bid be sealed before it is turned over?" asked Meyer. "Isn't that the proper way to do it?"

"We can talk about that at another date in my office," snapped Epinger, "not now. We're here to complete a sale."

Without further discussion, the deed was done, and ownership officially shifted to

the white-haired man, though he didn't seem particularly overjoyed with his bargain.

"What do you plan to do with them?" someone asked.

"I'm giving them to an employee," he said. "He's got a landscaping business and he can use the trailer too." He refused to elaborate or even to give his name, concerned perhaps that Meyer and his little band might decide to prick his conscience with a demonstration outside his home.

"At least your car and trailer will be used

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for something positive, like improving lawns," remarked a friend of Meyer's.

"That's true," said Meyer cheerfully as he began piling his recovered belongings into the back of the old VW. Painted prominently on the fender was the name with which he had good-naturedly christened this new mode of transportation: "Van" Epinger.

The real Van Epinger looked at the words, then shook his head in exasperation, as if to say: how do you get to people who will not be humiliated?

## CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert**, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of **ITT Calendar**.

### WASHINGTON, D C

#### May 29

Maggie Kuhn, DC Gray Panthers honor their founder. Congressman Ron Dellums, Claude Pepper and other prominent speakers celebrate this activist in her 79th year. Wednesday, May 29, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Herb's restaurant, 2121 P. Street, NW. Food provided. \$10 donation. For more information, call 347-6471.

#### May 31

Marx to Market Socialism: Alternatives for the U.S. left. A talk by Robin Hahnel, economist and author of "Socialism Today and Tomorrow." Dorothy Healey and Horst Brand re-

sponding. Presented by DC/MD Democratic Socialists of America. 8:00 p.m. at Machinists Hall, 1300 Connecticut Ave., NW. \$3.00 donation (\$1.00 low income).

### NEW YORK, N Y

#### May 31-June 2

2 1/2 day conference for trade unionists on Technological Change and Professional, Technical and Office Employment, sponsored by the Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO. 75 speakers from AFL-CIO unions and European unionists experienced in new technology bargaining plus researchers on white-collar work. Sheraton Center Hotel, 811 7th Ave. (at 52nd). Registration: \$75. For more information call (202) 638-0320.

#### June 8

Demonstrate to keep nuclear weapons out of New York Harbor. Join the human chain across the Verrazano Bridge. Gatherings in Brooklyn's Cannonball Park and in Staten Is-

land's South Beach Park at noon. Proceed onto the bridge at 1:45 p.m. For information call (212) 673-1808 or (212) 219-9527.

### MADISON, WI

#### June 14-16

The National Central America Health Rights Network will be holding its second annual conference June 14-16 in Madison, WI. Workshops will examine the relationships between health, social change and war in the region. For information: Medical Aid Project, P.O. Box 04464, Milwaukee, WI 53204, (608) 251-3241.

### CHICAGO, IL

#### June 9

Don't miss the 20th anniversary birthday party of the Chicago Peace Council. South Shore Country Club, 7059 South Shore Drive Sunday afternoon, June 9, 2:00-5:00 p.m. Adults \$12, kids \$5. For tickets and information: (312) 922-6578.

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# TAXING IRS'S TOLERANCE



**T**HE SPRING WIND WHIPPED UP THE dust on the unpaved side road leading into an Evanston, Ill., car pound, where broken-down hulks and still-shiny newer models huddled side by side waiting to be claimed by their owners or rust.

Sitting up front, as if guarding the entrance, was a red 1978 Chevrolet station wagon with a small, blue, two-wheeled trailer attached to the rear. The car looked to be in reasonably good shape despite its 80,000 miles, and the trailer appeared functional, although the words painted on each side might limit its immediate commercial utility.

On one side: "El Salvador—population about the size of Chicago/over 40,000 murders of civilians in four years, mostly by government police and death squads.... Can we hear their agony?" On the other side: "The people of Nicaragua are asking us to let them live in peace... Can we end the CIA invasion of their country?"

Until last February 27 the car and trailer belonged to Karl Meyer, a 48-year-old tax protester. That's when IRS agents seized them during the early morning hours from in front of Meyer's northside Chicago home and presented him with papers announcing that the action resulted from Meyer's refusal to pay some \$20,000 he owes in penalties and fines. Actually, Meyer owes about \$138,000, according to his latest calculations, but he didn't see any point in quibbling about that.

Beside the vehicle in the car pound stood three IRS security men looking appropriately grim and uncommunicative. Off to the side were Meyer and five friends. He held a picket sign that read, "I don't pay taxes. Ask me why." Printed beneath were his name, address and phone number. The group had assembled this May 9 to witness the sealed-bid sale of Meyer's car and trailer in partial remuneration of his debt. He had been notified of the date, time and place only a few days before, although the IRS advertised the sale in the classified section of the *Chicago Tribune* on April 28.

The IRS does not enjoy tangling with Karl Meyer, a soft-spoken, radical pacifist who works as a carpenter, looks like Jesus, professes atheism and keeps coming up with "inventions of peace" to promote civil disobedience and frustrate tax collectors. Through his writings—principally in the Catholic Worker newspaper—he popularized a widespread boycott of the federal telephone excise tax during the Vietnam War, and he originated the idea of getting around the employee withholding tax by claiming inflated numbers of dependents. (It's not lying, he contended, because people of the Third World really do depend on protesters to halt U.S. interference, exploitation and warmongering.) In the '60s and early '70s he spent plenty of time in prison, gradually earning the status of a quasi-martyr in the peace movement. During the last 10 years there were no more prosecutions, although Meyer never paid a

cent in taxes. But then in January he issued a press release explaining how he had filed a frivolous tax return with a different IRS office for every day of 1984 and how he had been subsequently assessed enormous fines which he had no intention of paying. The IRS decided it had to do something lest it look perpetually impotent in the face of brazen effrontery. Accordingly, IRS agent Van Epinger was deputized to snatch Meyer's car and trailer. After all, thousands of people had seen these vehicles at peace sit-ins, nuclear freeze rallies and other demonstrations in the Chicago area; they served as Meyer's mobile headquarters and portable pulpit from which he preached his pacifist gospel. The seizure therefore might deliver a certain symbolic message to the public.

Meyer could not (and would not, even if he could) pay the fines to recover his property, but he asked if he could at least remove his carpentry materials from the car and trailer before the sale.

At 10:00 a.m., agent Epinger, a young black man wearing shades and a mod jacket, arrived at the car pound and told Meyer he could take his things. For five minutes Meyer's friends lugged boxes of tools and even a ladder over to a beat-up Volkswagen hatchback someone recently turned over to him.

"How many bidders are there?" Meyer asked.

*Continued on page 23*

Story by  
**Robert J. McClory**

**Karl Meyer is a soft-spoken radical pacifist who works as a carpenter, looks like Jesus, professes atheism and keeps coming up with "inventions of peace" to promote civil disobedience and frustrate tax collectors.**

